FAITH AND RATIONALISM.

GEORGE P. FISHER.

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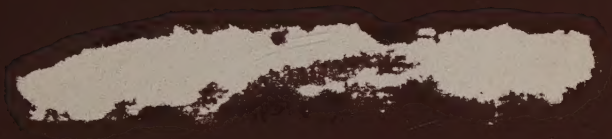

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FAITH AND RATIONALISM

WITH

SHORT SUPPLEMENTARY ESSAYS ON RELATED TOPICS

BY

GEORGE P. FISHER D. D.
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If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. JOHN VII. 17.

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Ψυχικὸς δὲ ἄνθρωπος οὐ δέχεται τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ. μωρία γὰρ αὐτῷ ἐστι, καὶ οὐ δύναται γνῶναι, ὅτι πνευματικῶς ἀνακρίνεται.—1 Cor. ii. 14.

"Howbeit, if we will truly consider it, it is more worthy to believe than to know as we now know. For in knowledge man's mind suffers from sense which is the reflection of things material—but in faith the spirit suffers from spirit which is a worthier agent. Otherwise it is in the state of men glorified, for then faith shall cease, and we shall know even as we are known." * * * * * * *

"The use of human reason in matters of religion is of two sorts; the former in the explanation of the mystery, the latter in the inferences derived from it. With regard to the explanation of the mysteries, we see that God vouchsafes to descend to the weakness of our apprehension, by so expressing His mysteries that they may be most sensible to us; and by grafting His revelations upon the notions and conceptions of our reason; and by applying His inspirations to open our understandings, as the form of the key to the ward of the lock. But here we ought by no means to be wanting to ourselves; for as God uses the help of our reason to illuminate us, so should we likewise turn it every way, that he may be more capable of receiving and understanding His mysteries; provided only that the mind be enlarged, according to its capacity, to the grandeur of the mysteries, and not the mysteries contracted to the narrowness of the mind." * * * * * * *

"But as the use of the human reason in things divine is of two kinds, so likewise in the use are two kinds of excess; the one when it inquires too curiously into the manner of the mystery; the other when the same authority is attached to inferences as to principles. * * * * * * * Wherefore it appears to me that it would be of especial use and benefit if a temperate and careful treatise were instituted, which, as a kind of divine logic, should lay down proper precepts touching the use of human reason in theology. For it would act as an opiate, not only to lull to sleep the vanity of curious speculations, wherewith sometimes the schools labor, but also in some degree to assuage the fury of controversies, wherewith the Church is troubled. Such a treatise I reckon among the things deficient; and call it *Sophron*, or *The Legitimate Use of Human Reason in Divine Subjects.*"—Bacon, *De Augmentis*, b. ix.

"Je sais qu' il a voulu qu' elles"—les vérités divines—"entrent du cœur dans l' esprit, et non pas de l' esprit dans le cœur, pour humilier cette superbe puissance du raisonnement qui prétend devoir être juge des choses que la volonté choisit; et pour guérir cette volonté infirme, qui s' est corrumpue par ses sales attachements. Et de là vient qu' au lieu qu' en parlant des choses humaines on dit qu' il faut les connaitre avant que de les aimer, ce qui a passé en proverbe [ignoti nulla cupido]: les saints au contraire disent en parlant des choses divines qu' il faut les aimer pour les connaître et qu' on n' entre dans la vérité que par la charité, dont ils ont fait une de leurs plus utiles sentences."—PASCAL, *Opuscules* (de l' Art de Persuader).

PREFACE.

Having been invited to deliver an address at the Princeton Theological School, I found the theme which I had chosen so attractive, that I wrote much more than it was possible to read in the time proper for such a discourse. I wrote, also, several supplementary essays,—branches, as it were, of the main stem. It turns out, however, that the branches in the aggregate take up more room than the stem out of which they grew. Such is the origin of the present book. I hardly need add that the hospitality of my brethren at Princeton does not render them in the least answerable for its contents.

G. P. F.

New Haven, April 14, 1879.

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FAITH AND RATIONALISM.

GENTLEMEN OF THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL:

I thank you for the opportunity given me to speak to you to-night. You have invited to address you one who can claim to represent no party or school in theology, but who feels himself drawn with an increasing conviction to the catholic truth which has been the life of Christian piety in all ages of the Church. You will not expect me to traverse the old ground where our fathers crossed their lances in times gone by. Nor will you prefer that I should retreat to some scholarly theme, not more pertinent at one time than at another, and remote from the questions that command the attention of thinking men at present. Relying on your candor, I choose rather to express frankly my thoughts in connection with a subject, which, though never void of interest, is, in our day, of special concern,—the Ascertainment of Religious Truth; or, to state it otherwise, FAITH AND RATIONALISM.

Those who are inclined to chafe at the narrow bounds and indistinct nature of our knowledge in religion, may remember for their comfort that the Apostle Paul, though conscious of being an organ of divine revelation, places himself in the same category with themselves. "*We* know in part," he says: "*We* see through a glass darkly." It was not a complete view, but a fragmentary one that he had of divine truth; as when you look off to a mountain that is partly hidden under clouds. You follow its outline for a certain distance, and then it is lost in the mist. A peak, here and there, emerges in the sunlight, but its connection with the mass below is broken off. And the perception even of what the Apostle did know had a certain obscurity attending it. It was not a beholding of the object itself directly. It was only a faint image that was discerned, like that reflected from a dim metallic mirror of the sort used in his time. The language in which we utter religious thought, and the conceptions at the basis of it, are declared by him to be the lispings of a child, compared with the words and ideas that belong to mature manhood. They answer for the infant, but in course of time they are superseded by something more conformed to the reality. Yet, the boundaries that are set about our knowledge during our life on earth, and the immensity of the realm of the unknown that stretches away

beyond our ken, afford not the least warrant for scepticism with respect to anything actually discovered. It did not subtract a jot from the confidence of Paul in that truth which had been disclosed to him. It has been well said by Paley that "true fortitude of understanding consists in not suffering what we do know to be disturbed by what we do not know." * He who despairs of knowing a little, because he cannot know all, may be compared to one who is so bewildered by the thought of the vast amount of pain and sorrow in the world, which it is beyond his power to relieve, that he does not think it worth while to stretch out his hand to the one or two sufferers within his reach.

I shall not undertake here to give an exhaustive definition of religious faith, but simply to point out some of its characteristics.

Faith is not sight: it has respect to things not seen. Nor is there an internal organ of vision, corresponding to the eye, which literally gazes upon things invisible to sense. For such an immediate perception of the supernatural world, a miracle is requisite. Faith is the prelude,—possibly, in some way, it is the rudiment, of sight. It serves in the room of sight, on the present stage of our being; but sight itself is to follow (1 Cor. xiii. 12). "Faith,," says Augustine,

* Natural Theology, Ch. v.

"is to believe what we do not yet see; and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe."* Or, as another deep-thinking writer has expressed it: "The very perfection and final bliss of the glorified spirit is represented by the Apostle as a plain aspect or intuitive beholding of truth in its eternal and immutable source." † Faith is opposed, for one thing, to the assent produced by logical demonstration, where the outcome is knowledge. Faith, however, need not involve any doubt or misgivings. In fact, though it may exist in different degrees of energy, may be strong or weak, the word naturally suggests the absence of doubt, or an inward certitude. One of the disputed questions about faith is whether it be an immediate act of the mind, or the product of inference. Is there always a process of reasoning, embracing, at the least, one step? Pascal is one of the writers who has compared faith to the intuitions of number, space, time, etc. We have to start with an act of trust in our faculties; we cannot prove the axioms which are the premises of all proof. Pascal's statement is valid against the logical fanaticism which scorns to take anything upon trust. If it were the case that the assent given in faith is immediate, such assent could not, merely on that ground, be branded as credulity. Let the point be decided as it may, still

* Sermon xliii. † Coleridge (Shedd's ed.,) Vol. I., p. 449.

not even the primary truths of religion are to be placed in the catalogue of these axioms of the intellect,—for example, the properties of number and space—which all sound minds of necessity assume to be true. The grand peculiarity of religious faith is the part which the heart plays in it. Although an act of reason, if reason be taken in the broad sense in which it is synonymous with the human intelligence, faith, nevertheless, springs out of feeling, and it withers away when the feelings in which it has its root disappear. Faith is subjective to this extent, that its grounds are not appreciable by every mind, by the good and evil alike. A living faith is not connected with any particular grade of intellectual power. The early Christians were many of them slaves; they were generally of the lower class; they could not spell correctly, as we see by the epitaphs in the catacombs. Most believers of whatever age know little or nothing of historical evidences. They cannot tell whether Justin Martyr quotes the Gospels of the canon. They cannot answer the objections of learned infidels to natural or revealed religion. Yet it is far from being true that their faith is the mere result of tradition and education. It may be the natural, legitimate offspring of impressions of feeling, which the universe within and around them, and the Christ of the Scriptures, have made upon their souls. Before

their faith can be denounced as irrational, the spontaneous feelings at the root of it must be shown to be abnormal. This leads me to say that however we may decide the question whether faith is immediate or inferential, this is certain that it need not arise through any explicit process, of the several steps of which the believer takes account. Let me add one thing more. Into the deepest exercise of faith, the will enters. Trust is an act; I might say, a venture. So it is when we believe in Christ. As He identified Himself with us, we identify ourselves with Him. This is the great secret of the Gospel. Because the will turns the scale to the one side or the other, atheism, and disbelief in the Gospel, are treated in the Bible as sins. A demand is made upon men to believe. Who ever *commanded* another to believe that two and two are four, or to accept the doctrine of free-trade, or the nebular hypothesis?

No writer has had more influence in forming opinion on this subject, in English-speaking communities, than Locke. He defines faith to be assent to any proposition, which is not made out by deductions of reason, "upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God, in some extraordinary way of communication." You believe on the authority of a witness, having first established by proof his credibility. On this definition

the criticism might be made that it limits faith to the credence of propositions or doctrines; trust in persons, in any other capacity than as witnesses, not being expressly included. Augustine and the schoolmen, whose general notion of faith was a more satisfactory one, do not always keep clear of the same error. Another exception to be taken to Locke's view is that it makes no room for the truths of natural religion; for example, that "things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"—truths, nevertheless, which are proper objects of faith. Moreover, how is the prior fact of the credibility of the divine messengers to be established? No doubt, faith embraces a belief in the testimony of God. But how shall we assure ourselves that we have that testimony? What are the data on the basis of which the mind advances to this conclusion? Certainly, they are not such as avail to convince all. Many historical inquirers are found to disbelieve, who ordinarily are chargeable with no special want of discrimination or of candor. Shall we not have to consider the contents of the testimony, to inquire whether any communication is likely to come to us from God, and whether the doctrine delivered bears in it marks of truth, and of having so high and pure an origin? Have we any need of a revelation? These and other preliminary questions may, perhaps, be answered differently by different persons, and so

there fails to be an agreement as to the data on which assent or denial must depend. In the ordinary affairs of life, we make up our minds under the influence of multiform impressions, which are often subtle, not easy to be analyzed by ourselves, and which are by no means the same in all individuals. These impressions have each of them a certain power to induce a judgment one way or the other. The verdict of the mind is the result of their collective action. Locke's defect is, not so much in what he says, as in what he fails to say, on this topic. He was a lover of truth, an honest man; but we miss in him a certain depth and intensity of moral and religious feeling, which belong to profound teachers upon the philosophy of religion, like Augustine, Pascal, Luther, Coleridge, Edwards. Hence his Socinian proclivities, and the circumstance that he became an oracle of that class. It was the same in politics; his theory of the social compact is a piece of Rationalism. He founds the obligations of civil society on the voluntary agreement of the individuals that compose it. How much profounder the philosophy which finds in society "a predisposed order of things," to use the phrase of Burke, with which the will of every rational being is supposed to agree; that philosophy which recognizes in the state, as in the family, an object about which deep instincts of humanity entwine themselves, prior to all

scientific analysis! The real drift of Locke's political theory comes out in the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau. It has been well described as a kind of adventurous courage in Paley, whose mental power was less than that of Locke, but whose general tone of feeling was similar, to go forth against the opponents of Christianity, demanding of them no concession except that a revelation of a future state of rewards and punishments "is not improbable, or not improbable in any great degree."* But this admission, which is all that Paley calls for in his "Preparatory Considerations," does not suffice, in point of fact, in numerous instances, to impart a convincing efficacy to his argument, notwithstanding the masterly skill and unrivaled perspicuity with which he has presented it.

It is a curious and instructive fact that the founders of modern Socinianism were extreme supernaturalists. Their tendency was to attribute our knowledge of religion almost exclusively to Revelation, and to make the one proof of Revelation miracles. Some of the Socinian leaders in Poland found no valid evidence of the being of God except in Scripture. The fact of a future life was made to rest, in the same way, wholly on the testimony of the Bible. On this theory, we become acquainted with religion as we learn the exist-

* Paley's Evidences, "Preparatory Considerations."

ence and geographical features of an unknown continent, by no other means than through information brought to us by a credible traveler. The principle of authority, which has its rightful place among the bases of belief, is made the all in all. Religion is something imported into the soul by instruction duly authenticated; not a slumbering life waked up within us by a supernatural approach. This character of the old Socinianism shows how extremes meet. The rebound to entire disbelief in Revelation naturally followed such a meagre notion of religion and of the function of Revelation, and the exaltation of miracles to the exclusion of other proofs of Christianity.

We shall get more light upon the nature of faith if we look at its opposite—the temper of Rationalism. Rationalism is a term often used to designate the position of those who disbelieve in Revelation, and suppose that whatever knowledge we have in religion is derived from unassisted reason. It is applied to such as reject the miraculous element in Christianity; for example, to the Kantian theologians in Germany, whose creed was made up of three articles; God, free-will, and immortality, and who cared only for the morals of the Gospel; and to the later Pantheistic Rationalists, the disciples of Hegel, who resolved Christianity into a metaphysical speculation, of which the Gospel history is a

loose, popular, mythical equivalent. But I speak of Rationalism now, not as standing for a set of opinions, but rather as a method or spirit. It is not impossible that the Rationalistic temper or method should be associated for the time with orthodox tenets—an unnatural union to be sure, and one that could not last. Thus in Germany, before Schleiermacher came forward to vindicate for religion an independent foundation in human nature, much of the current orthodoxy was penetrated with a Rationalistic leaven. It was a *verstandes-theologie*, to use the term applied to it by later believing theologians like Tholuck and Neander. I think that I am not unjust in saying that a like tendency characterized a prominent section of orthodox teachers in New England, before the outbreaking of the Unitarian revolt. Jonathan Edwards had a large, rich nature, deep wells of feeling, a subtle, spiritual insight. His book on the Will is not drawn out of his deepest vein. One should look for that to his sermon on Spiritual Light, or to his remarks on the Satisfaction of Christ, a discussion which appears to me, in some of its parts, to go deeper into the heart of that subject, than the treatises of Grotius or Anselm, or almost any other essay on the same theme, ancient or modern. But the mystical element was wanting in the arid mind of his son, the younger President Edwards, and conspicuously in Emmons; and some of the "improve-

ments" in theology which were brought in by theologians of their stamp are neither tenable in themselves, nor adapted to conciliate philosophical adversaries of the evangelical creed.

Rationalism denotes a certain usurpation of reason. The understanding steps out of its province, arrogates to itself more than belongs to it, refuses to hear other voices than its own, disregards the just claims of other departments of our being, or spurns the aid which they afford in the ascertaining of truth. The understanding exalts its own separate, insulated function, pushes on without its natural auxiliaries—sensibility and conscience, the life and experience of the soul—and disdains feeling as an indirect source of light, and a legitimate warrant of conviction. Let us attend to several of the phases which the Rationalistic temper may assume.

1. Rationalism is impatient of mysteries in religion.* It demands that everything shall be made plain. It will not endure the twilight, or the night when only a few stars glimmer to guide the wayfarer until the dawn shall appear.

* The word mystery has in the New Testament a peculiar sense. It signifies what once was hidden, but is now revealed: Rom. xi. 25, xvi. 25, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 9, Eph. i. 9, Mark iv. 11. The truth thus revealed may, or may not be, in our sense of the term, mysterious, *i. e.*, only partly explicable.

What is meant by a mysterious truth? Obviously not a truth of which we have no knowledge whatever, and which, therefore, stands in no relation to the knowing faculty. America was not a mystery to the ancients, before its existence was even surmised. It did not become a mystery until a glimpse was caught of its shores, or until, at least, there was an incipient belief that a continent lay to the west of the Atlantic. Many call that a mystery which they cannot *imagine*, or present as a concrete object before the mind's eye. But this we cannot do of *man* in the abstract, as distinguished from this or that individual, or of any general notion. Things which persons cannot picture to themselves, they will say that they do not understand. Even educated persons, who ought to know better, fall sometimes into this way of speaking. With more truth may obscure or inadequate ideas, like substance, power, the soul, infinite space, infinite duration, be styled mysterious. The conceptive faculty is baffled in the attempt to grasp certain objects, though they are known as realities. Locke has much to say on this subject.* Now we cannot deal with what is partly seen as if it were seen wholly. And so if we proceed to reason upon things imperfectly conceived, if we deal with notions as co-extensive with the object, when they are not, we may be led into contradictions. There are

* Essay, b. ii. cc. xxix. xxxi.

propositions in which we may rest as far as they are the correlate of moral or practical truth, but which may not be pushed out to further conclusions. This is the nature, then, of mysterious truth. Something is gained if even this obvious fact is admitted, that we are bound to regard as true much which it is impossible to realize in imagination. God—to take one example—formed his purposes, yet his purposes are eternal. There never was a time when they were not.

We are not to make mysteries of our own. We are not to create artificial difficulties by our own hypotheses and speculations; we are not to invent untenable dogmas, and then take refuge in mystery as a shelter against assault. Sir William Hamilton says, in his decided way, of Brown's defence of his theory of perception: "Having swamped himself in following the *ignis fatuus* of a theory, he has no right to refer its private absurdities to the imbecility of human reason, or to generalize his own factitious ignorance by a '*Quantum est quod nescimus!*'"* Nor is the plea of mystery to be interposed as a bar to study. The fact that the truths of Christianity are detached and incomplete, may well stimulate us to explore for their hidden bonds of union, and for the complementary truth which they imply. It has been said that the opinions of most

* Edinburgh Review, 1830.

men mark the point where they grew tired of thinking. Perhaps a like remark might be made of the boundaries by which many fence off the region of the unknowable. I may not be able to solve a problem, but another may do better. In theology, individuals now and then appear to do a work like that of the bold explorers who push their voyages into unknown seas, and descry lands never before discovered. "*Cœlorum perrupit claustra*"—he broke through the inclosures of heaven—is the exalted praise given to Sir William Herschel, on his monument at Upton. There are great teachers of the Church to whom, in our enthusiasm, we are sometimes moved to accord a like tribute of admiration.

But mystery there must be. Even on the baldest theory of materialism, our existence, when we pause to think upon it, is a wonder to ourselves. When we reflect that we are creatures, when we consider the slow unfolding of our powers, the disadvantages under which we seek for knowledge, the weakness of childhood and of old age, the distraction of earthly care, the influence of prejudice, the thousand avenues through which error and delusion may enter, the marvel is that any man can dream of being omniscient. The other extreme of absolute skepticism, or confessed total ignorance, would be less irrational.

And mystery there will always be. Even when we

emerge into the brighter light of heaven, there will forever be to the finite mind an unexplored beyond. Great truths have an unilluminated, as well as an illuminated side. "Three-sevenths of the moon's surface," writes Alexander von Humboldt, "are entirely concealed from our observation, and must always remain so, unless new and unexpected disturbing causes come into play. These cosmical relations involuntarily remind us of nearly similar conditions in the intellectual world where * * * there are regions similarly turned away from us, and apparently unattainable, of which only a narrow margin has revealed itself, for thousands of years, to the human mind, appearing, from time to time, either glimmering in true or delusive light." * It is a mistake to think that practical piety would be promoted by dispelling all mystery, and bringing everything within the grasp of finite comprehension. We look up to things that are above. We do not adore what is on our level, or beneath us. The vault of heaven is not made less impressive to the beholder by the thought that stretching away beyond the utmost reach of his vision are limitless fields of space. Who would pour the glare of noon-day through the aisles and "high embowed roof" of the cathedral where he kneels in worship? Why do we speak of "a dim religious light"? The future life is behind the

* Cosmos, Bohn's ed., vol. I., p. 83.

veil; and as John Foster has said, there are "descanters on the invisible world" . . . "from the vulgarity of whose illuminations you are excessively glad to escape into the solemn twilight of faith." It is the deep mystery of a human soul that renders it an object of such fascinating interest. We are not much attracted by shallow natures, who show all that is in them. How often has it been imagined that the power of Christianity was to be increased by getting rid of the truths that baffle the attempt at precise definition, and shade off into mystery! I could bring you passages from Dr. Channing, Dr. Gannett, and others, which confidently predict that "liberal Christianity," as they termed it, would prove a great bulwark against infidelity. Christianity by being made "rational" would disarm its opponents. They were sincere in this expectation; but they lived to see movements springing up under their eyes, which demonstrated how groundless it was. Liberal Christianity did not prove to be the precursor of a new era of faith, and the solvent of unbelief. On the contrary, its progeny excited amazement and a degree of dismay in those who had unwittingly assisted at their birth.

Under this head, I must illustrate the remark that the Rationalistic tendency is not confined to heterodox schools of thought. High Calvinists have sometimes assumed to unveil the motives of God in the creation

of the universe and of man, to an extent not warranted by Revelation. How different is the tone of Bishop Butler; as when he says: "The whole end for which God made and thus governs the world, may be utterly beyond the reach of our faculties. There may be somewhat in it as impossible for us to have any conception of, as for a blind man to have any conception of colors." *

2. Rationalism fails to take into account the influence of sin upon our capacity for investigating religious truth. True, this darkening influence may be over-stated, or stated so that scepticism is the proper corollary. This is one extreme. The other extreme is that Pelagianism of the intellect, which springs out of a Pelagian idea of sin, and is oblivious of one grand fountain of intellectual error. The caution, the modesty, the humility, the contentment with partial knowledge, of one who is conscious not only of the natural weakness of his intellectual powers, but, also, of the infirmity consequent upon sin, are foreign to the Rationalistic spirit. It is not alone, or chiefly, that sin may render one sluggish in the search for truth, or engender an unfair bias, or a selfish reluctance to admit an unwelcome discovery. These vices do often exist in professed inquirers for religious truth. But this is not the worst effect of sin. Far from it. In-

* Analogy, P. I., ch. 10.

activity of conscience, a blunted discernment of the truth, when there is no conscious hatred of it, or intellectual dishonesty,—the most baneful influence of sin is of this character. Its action, like that of an opiate, is to dull the perceptions. And it is the higher faculties of the soul which are thus affected by the alienation of the will from God. A man understands the world in which he feels at home, which calls out his sympathy, where his hopes are fastened, to which he has given up the affections of his nature. For the "natural man," it is not the world of "things not seen and eternal." "How *can ye believe*," said Jesus, "which receive honor one of another?" The love of distinction precluded the possibility of faith. The heart had its object and was satisfied. How could it go forth to a higher good? Without a craving for it, how could it understand it?

3. Rationalism ignores, partially or wholly, the premises of religious faith. Moral and religious impressions, that involve, or lead to, faith, are phenomena of experience. They must be known through experience, if known at all, like the filial feeling, or love between the sexes. A man born deaf is a poor judge of music; a man born blind cannot safely reason upon colors. The Bible frequently calls those who are insensible to the realities of religion, "deaf" and "blind." The sense of these realities varies very much in degree in

different persons. Where it is feeble, the antecedent condition of faith is proportionately absent. Take the perception of the evil of sin—in what different degrees does it exist! How different are the images which the same words call up! Compare the penitent thief on the Cross with the impenitent! Compare the Publican in the parable with the Pharisee! The sensation of guilt is very faint in some men. In Paul, Luther, Wesley, Bunyan, Edwards, and in a multitude of less fame, the sense of unworthiness is overwhelming. They can only cry, "Infinite upon infinite!" Now here is a variable element; and yet it is an element that will give shape and color to all of a man's religious beliefs. Let me quote a few lines from Dr. Newman: "Different, indeed, is his view"—the view taken by a religious man—"of God and of man, of the claims of God, of man's resources, of the guilt of disobedience, and of the prospect of forgiveness, from those flimsy, self-invented notions, which satisfy the reason of the mere man of letters, or the prosperous and self-indulgent philosopher!" . . . . "To see truly the cost and misery of sinning, we must quit the public haunts of business and pleasure, and be able, like the angels, to see the tears shed in secret; to witness the anguish of pride and impatience, where there is no sorrow; the sting of remorse, where yet there is no repentance; the wearing, never-ceasing struggle between

conscience and sin; the misery of indecision; the harassing, haunting fears of death, and a judgment to come; and the superstitions which these engender. Who can name the overwhelming total of the world's guilt and suffering,—suffering crying for vengeance on the authors of it, and guilt foreboding it!"* Suppose one to have his eye opened to the appalling reality of sin and guilt; his judgment on every leading question of religion and theology will be powerfully affected by that perception. The being of God, the need of deliverance from without, the atonement, the Spirit's influence, will present themselves to him in an utterly new light. Take, for one instance, the sinless character of Jesus! What a momentous fact this is now felt to be! "This man hath done nothing amiss!" To the Penitent on the Cross, this utterance had a depth of meaning which ordinary minds cannot fathom. There is need, first, of that sense of unworthiness which had expressed itself in the honest, sad confession: "We, indeed, suffer the due reward of our deeds!" The innocence of Jesus, and his own conscious guilt—each cast an illumination upon the other. Has a man struggled with the appetites of sense, or

* University Sermons, pp. 114, 115.—By the various writings of this author, on the foundations of religion, I have been stimulated and instructed in ways that do not always admit of specific acknowledgment.

with the selfish thirst for human praise, or has he known sin in any form with that intimate knowledge that comes from an experience of its power, the fact that Christ was absolutely without sin, that with all His purity of conscience, which pierced through every disguise, not a syllable of self-accusation mingled in his prayers to the Father to whom He laid bare His spirit,—not even when He was thrown back on Himself by the dreadful ordeal of suffering—this fact is more impressive than any miracle that He wrought, and renders the miracles credible. Yet to one who knows not sin in this living way, the same fact may hardly excite a moment's attention.

But some one may say to you, in the way of objection: "I have no such feeling respecting sin; your conviction on this subject, and, therefore, the beliefs induced by it, are subjective." This you will have to allow; you can pretend to no demonstration. You speak for yourself. But you can affirm, first, that this experience is as distinct and as inexpungable in your mind as any fact of consciousness; and that for yourself, you are as sure of the reality of sin and guilt as of the existence of the external world, and, perhaps, more so; and, secondly, that you do not stand alone. The Catholic Church is with you; a great number out of every nation, and kindred, and people and tongue, in a long course of centuries, give a like testimony.

This experience is not confined to an individual; it cannot be set aside as something merely subjective, personal, mystical, eccentric. It has a catholic quality. Nay, it is met with on heathen as well as on Christian ground. If you discredit Paul, go to Seneca. Rationalism makes light of assents of the mind, of the antecedents of which it is practically ignorant. It reasons within a sphere where the data of inference are faintly perceived, and thus it reasons in the dark.

4. Rationalism is inclined to take no account of implicit mental processes. In the common affairs of life, men generally reason without distinctly knowing it. They do not analyze the process, either while it is going forward, or afterward. They bring its validity to no formal test. It is considered the attribute of genius to bound to its goal, without taking the intermediate steps, or else taking them so rapidly that they are not separately discerned in consciousness. Genius divines the truth before it is proved. The story is told of Hayden that one to whom he undertook to give lessons in thorough bass inquired of him why he put this note and that chord in his symphonies; to which the puzzled composer could only answer, "Because it was right." What is sagacity but a power of instantaneous judgment? The steps of the mental process are not separated; they have been likened to the spokes in a swiftly-revolving wheel.

The sagacity of a merchant, a sea-captain, a physician, an artisan, a teacher, may be a sure guide, even when it is difficult for him to assign reasons for his mental decisions. "I have fought many battles," said Wellington to Sir William Napier,—"and have acquired an instinct about them which I cannot describe; but I know how to fight a battle." Tact, if it be not a strictly intuitive perception, is a form of rapid, implicit reasoning. Locke himself says: "God has not been so sparing to men [as] to make them barely two-legged animals, and left it to Aristotle to make them rational, *i. e.*, those few of them that he could get so to examine the grounds of syllogisms," etc. "He has given them a mind that can reason," . . . "it has a native faculty to perceive the coherence, or incoherence of its ideas,"* etc. The mass of Christians are persuaded of the truths of religion, not by arguments formally drawn out, and weighed singly, but as the result of a mental process which may not be any the less valid for not being the object of reflective analysis.

5. The remark may be added that Rationalism exaggerates the office of logic in religion. In ascertaining religious truth, it is first of all important that the soul should have the experiences which are the antecedents of conviction; for example, that life should be infused into the conscience. Men do not reason them-

* Essay, B. iv., ch. xvii.

selves into the exercise of love, any more than they reason themselves into the perception of the beauty of a landscape, or into the enjoyment of a painting of Titian. There must be life, and its phenomena must be presented in consciousness, in order to have something to reason upon. This is simply to say that in order to understand life, one must live. If a child would see into the *rationale* of the family institution, let him exercise filial love and obedience, and in such ways provide himself with the materials for a philosophy of the subject. The comparative insufficiency of logic as a means of awakening religious faith is obvious to wise men. Says a great writer: "First shoot round corners, and you may not despair of converting by a syllogism." "Logicians are more set upon concluding rightly, than upon right conclusions." "After all, man is *not* a reasoning animal; he is a seeing, feeling, contemplating, acting animal."* Let me add that the very process of testing faith by analysis may conceivably destroy it. The sense of the authority of conscience, of the beauty of holiness, of guilt, of dependence, may vanish in the process of inspecting it. Dissection destroys life in the very act. Feeling is shy, and flies when it is sharply looked at, and put in a crucible. The process was healthy, rational, by which the mind advanced from these experiences to a

* Neuman's Grammar of Assent, p. 91.

conclusion; but take the experiences away, which are largely spontaneous, and the conclusion goes with them. The foundation is swept away, and the superstructure falls too.

6. Rationalism tends to regard Christianity exclusively as a doctrine. There is no need to say that, in itself considered, the teaching of Christ cannot be valued too highly. He came to bear witness to the truth. But then even His teaching is not a body of abstractions. Its theme was partly His personal relation to men; the import to be attached to His victory over evil, to His death, to His resurrection; the fact of His reign, His intercession, His invisible presence with His disciples to the end of the world. His coming into the world was an act of love; a free act, not a proposition in ethics or religion. His work stands forth as an achievement. It is not a theorem, it is not a deduction of logic; it is a deliverance through a deed. If there were nothing but doctrine, the teacher might be dropped out of sight, as, on that theory of the Gospel, he generally will be, sooner or later. If I have the writings of Aristotle, I have all that he can do for me. I may be ignorant of the author, I may forget his existence, without any serious loss. To the view of Christ as a Teacher, it may be added that He is, also, an Example. The example of Christ, also, is of priceless worth. But then the Rationalist will

sometimes ask, What care I whether it be history or myth? All that is righteous, noble, and holy in His character as it is set forth in the record, remains so, even if that character is imagined. Hence Christ Himself, as an actual person, is of little or no account. In opposition to such ideas, it is something to see that a work was done by Christ which is a ground of reconciliation and peace, only as it is felt and acknowledged to be real and historical. But we do not attain to the full Christian position, as opposed to the Rationalistic, until we see that faith is a personal relation of the soul to a living, present Christ, whereby its isolated, separate, selfish life is given up. Then we penetrate to the heart of the Gospel as taught by St. Paul and St. John. We believe not merely in a historical Christ of the past, but in a living Saviour, without whom we "can do nothing."

7. Rationalism, even in its better types, is prone to seek for religious truth merely for its own sake. Is not this right? Is there any more exalted motive to impel the inquirer? Yes, there is a higher motive than the love of knowledge. That higher impulse is the love of goodness. There is an aspiration to be perfect in character; a hunger for righteousness; a yearning to be just, holy, faithful, obedient, loving. The promise is not to the lover of knowledge, but to the pure in heart. He that doeth the will of God

shall know of the doctrine. It is revealed to "babes." I do not see how any earnest man can sanction the much applauded remark of Lessing, that if truth were offered in one hand, and the search for truth in the other, he would choose the latter.* This offers an affront to truth. It puts the pleasure of the chase above the prize at the end of it. No one would hope much from efforts to ascertain religious truth, that were instigated by the love of money. Where a student is instigated predominantly by the desire of literary fame, which Hume avows to have been his "ruling passion,"† it is no cause for wonder if the gates into the sanctuary of truth are closed against him. But, if the Scriptures are to be trusted, what greater success can be expected for researches which proceed from no other impulse than intellectual curiosity? There is no royal road into the kingdom of God, opened for the acute, the bright-minded, the speculative, the learned. "He took a child and set him in the midst of them." There is but one door, the door of humility. I think that if the unbelievers who just now figure prominently among the writers and lecturers in Natural Science, had the simple love of goodness which belonged to

* As Shakespeare says of a lover's pleasure, before and after his suit is granted:

"Things won are done, joy's soul lies in the doing."—
Troilus and Cressida.

† See Hume's Autobiography.

Kepler, and Newton, and Faraday, they would, like these, believe in God and in Christianity. They would then stand at the right point of view. They would feel the need of the salvation of Christ for themselves, and would believe in it from its correspondence to this need. "They that are whole need not a physician."

Göethe, in his powerful drama, has described that unbridled lust of knowledge, which longs to

> "——detect the inmost force
> Which binds the world, and guides its course;
> Its germs, productive powers explore." *

Disheartened by the fruitless struggle to unravel the mysteries of being, Faust will taste of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He will know the delights of sense:

> "The thread of thought at last is broken
> And knowledge brings disgust unspoken.
> Let us the sensual deeps explore."

In truth his pact with Mephistopheles was made earlier, when he aspired to omniscience. He sought then to break through the barriers of finite being. The reaction of sensual passion is strange, yet not un-

* "——was die Welt
Im Innersten zusammenhält,
Schau' alle Wirkenskraft und Samen."—*Faust, Th.* 1.

natural, in one who, having made a god of science, has attempted a wild flight into a region inaccessible to man, and is flung breathless to the earth. The restless craving that is foiled in the pursuit of one object turns to another.

If the rank belongs to faith which we have claimed for it, the question may arise, What safeguard have we against superstition? What shall prevent us from mistaking the dreams of fancy for realities? In answer to this question it might be said that men are not found to be infallible in their logic more than in their feelings. How shall they be sure that their reasoning is exact, that no weak link gets into the chain? Prejudice and passion may warp the intellect of the most expert logician. Fallacies creep into the argument of astute reasoners. No sound man yields to arguments for a proposition that contravenes the moral sense, whether he can detect a flaw in them or not.

> "The estate of man would be, indeed, forlorn,
> If false conclusions of the reasoning power
> Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
> Through which the ear converses with the heart.*"

Reason, it has been justly observed, may exercise a critical office with regard to a process which the under-

* Wordsworth's Excursion, b. iv.

standing of itself is incompetent to originate. There is a regulative function which it may use in relation to experiences of the soul which have a subsistence of their own. These do not disdain to legitimate themselves at the bar of reason. It is said with truth that arguments must be used in persuading the heathen to accept Christianity, and with unbelievers. But there is little promise of success in the promulgation of the Gospel, unless a moral feeling can be reached, or a sense of moral need aroused. The missionary must expose the inadequacy of the heathen system to satisfy necessities and aspirations of human nature, and, on the contrary, must point out the adaptedness of Christianity to this end. He will make no headway unless he can reach needs that are below the region of mere intellectual debate. The greatest teacher of natural religion among the heathen, Socrates, unlike the Sophists, appealed to moral intuitions. St. Paul at Athens aims to awaken a consciousness of the unworthy and unsatisfying character of heathen worship, and to point out to his hearers the God whom they were feeling after, and blindly seeking; the Being whom even then they ignorantly worshiped.

The Scriptures exhort us, indeed, to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in us. But the prime corrective of error they make to be a moral one. "If thine eye be single,"—thy inmost motive or aim be

right,—"thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. vi. 22). "Every one that loveth . . . knoweth God." (1 John iv. 7.) The "wisdom of the world"—Greek philosophy and speculation—had not given a knowledge of God. Divine things are "spiritually discerned." "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." (1 Cor. i. 21, ii. 14, 15). "The sheep hear his voice." (John x. 3). The prayer of Paul is that the Philippian Christians may grow in love, and, by that means, in "knowledge and in all judgment,"—the knowledge of principles and the perception of their practical applications. (Phil. i. 9).

The foregoing remarks on the relation of faith and reason suggest two observations. The first is that about every great Christian truth there is a debatable ground. A definition is to be given; the bond of connection between the truth supposed and other related Christian truths is to be sought; a place is to be found for it in the general sum of our knowledge. All this work of accurate conception and explanation constitutes an open field for differences to arise among those who concur in the main thing. Two maps of the same country will seldom, if ever, exactly agree. There are the same great rivers, the same mountains, the same cities, the same grand divisions; but the boundaries and locations will not precisely coincide. Now, where the line is to be drawn between the truth itself and

this debatable province, it may not be always easy to determine. You might draw it in one place, and I in another. One may hold that more is revealed respecting a truth than another is able to allow. One may see implications which another does not admit. One may identify with a truth his own particular conception, or philosophy respecting it, and become narrow and intolerant. Another may err on the side of latitudinarian vagueness, may leave the truth in a haze where nothing distinct is seen. A passion for definiteness, a passion for completeness, impatience of difficulties, the exigencies of a system, have led men to attenuate a truth, or else to exaggerate or distort it. All I wish to assert here is that in connection with a great religious truth there is room for diversity of definition, exposition, defence.

It is one of the wise cautions which Lord Bacon gives to theologians that they should not attach the same authority to "inferences as to principles." "For it cannot but open men's eyes," he says, "to see that many controversies do merely pertain to that which is either not revealed or positive, and that many others do grow upon weak and obscure inferences and derivations." *

The second observation has to do with the limit of the believer's responsibility in relation to difficulties

* De Augmentis, b. ix. Advancement of Learning, b. ii.

and objections brought against the articles of the Christian faith. When we assert that a truth has a mysterious side, we absolve ourselves from answering that class of attacks and objections which presuppose the contrary. Religious truth has practical relations. It is largely on these that its verification rests. In many of the concerns of life, we feel justified in leaving theoretical difficulties to take care of themselves. We rely upon the test of experience. Then, it is always to be kept in mind that many of the problems of theology are equally problems of philosophy. The Christian believer is no more bound to clear them up than any other man. Also, many features of revealed truth are strictly analogous to facts in the divine administration of the world, which are patent and undeniable. Whether the Christian truth be explicable or not, therefore, it stands on a level, as regards the objection to its reasonableness, with conceded, unquestionable facts. This analogy reduces the assailant to silence. Let him transfer his quarrel with Christian truth to a stubborn antagonist—the constitution and course of the world. Here is the problem of liberty and necessity. It emerges in theology, and confronts us in connection with several essential truths of Christianity. But it crops out equally in the study of history, the moment we see that history is not a chaotic succession of unconnected events, and in the concerns of daily

life. Let the objector to Christian truth solve it, if he can, for himself. It is purely a work of supererogation when the Christian believer goes out to satisfy inquirers or opponents as to truth, whatever perplexities belong to it, which they assume in their habitual judgments, and act upon in their daily conduct.

In the light of the foregoing discussion, let me rapidly pass in review several of the leading truths of religion.

What are the sources of our belief in God? First, this belief stands in a close relation to the operations of conscience. I hear in my soul a mandate, as from a Superior. It is holy, and this inspires the belief that holiness—a holy will and preference—characterize its unseen Source. Blame, approbation, shame, which ensue upon obedience or transgression, are feelings which are "correlative with persons." Says a profound writer, from whom I have before quoted: "If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear. If, on doing wrong we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother; if, on doing right, we enjoy the same serenity of mind, the same sooth-

ing, satisfactory delight which follows on our receiving praise from a father, we certainly have within us the image of some person, to whom our love and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled, and waste away. These feelings are such as require for their cause an intelligent being." . . . . . "'The wicked flees when no man pursueth'; then why does he flee? Whence his terror? Who is it that he sees in solitude, in darkness, in the hidden chambers of the heart?" * Shall we call it an act of reasoning by which we arrive at this faith? If so, the process is not explicit in consciousness, and it includes but one step. If it be called reasoning, still it must be borne in mind that the principle of cause and effect does not spring up in consciousness, in its abstract form, but is reached by comparison and generalization. As a matter of fact, we pass from one concrete to another in making inferences. The assumption on which we proceed is latent. But I prefer to consider the thought of God and belief in God, which spontaneously arise in connection with the feelings of conscience, as analogous to the recognition of unseen objects in the outward world, which is conditioned on the multiform impressions of sense. God reveals Him-

* Grammar of Assent, pp. 105, 106.

self to the soul in these voices within it. Let it be observed here that if the emotions of conscience are subtracted, if conscience be lifeless, the antecedents of faith have vanished. The case is like that of one whose organs of sense are paralyzed, to whom, therefore, external things do not reveal themselves.

The second source of our belief in God is closely connected with the one just named. It is the sense of dependence, which finds no object to rest upon in the outward world. From the world I distinguish myself, thereby attaining to self-consciousness. The outward world acts on me, and awakens in me the feeling of dependence; but I act upon it, I am conscious of myself as distinct from it, and cannot ascribe my being to it; and thus the sense of dependence spontaneously finds its correlate in the infinite Person, who thus reveals His existence, at the same time that in conscience He reveals His holy authority.

But the soul tends to God, is drawn to Him as the ground of rest, and the satisfying good. Hear the outcry of the human spirit, when the sense of communion with Him is clouded! "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God! My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." The soul believes in that which it thirsts for, not by framing an argument, although an argument could be framed out of this very feeling, but immedi-

ately—or, rather, implicitly. The hart believes that there are water-brooks; otherwise he would not seek them. It is a wise word of Pascal that he who seeks for God implies, and may know, that God is. But if there were a hart which never felt thirst, he would not believe in cooling water. It is not at broken cisterns which can hold no water, it is only at one fountain, that man can slake his otherwise insatiable thirst for a sufficient good.

But, one may ask, does not the design evident in nature prove that there is a God? The argument from design is a valid one, and is not shaken by recent discoveries in science. But this argument presupposes that I am myself a free intelligence. If what I call freedom in myself, by which I make and carry out a plan or pursue an end, is delusive, and if all my own purposes are really the product of blind, impersonal agency, then the world may spring from the same cause, and the argument of design is undermined. But how can I demonstrate my own freedom as a person? It is a fact of consciousness, but it admits of no proof. Then, we know that many, in these days especially, who come in contact, in their daily studies, with what strike us as marks of design, are not convinced of theism. They have another interpretation to attach to the phenomena spread out before us. Unless there be a prior faith, germinant at least,

engendered in the soul from the sources already pointed out, the naturalist may travel through the visible creation without discovering God.

I have now to add that an act of will enters into faith. There is a choice involved in it.

I believe with Julius Muller that "the holding fast to the personal God and to the inviolability of conscience, is an act of the soul, conditioned on a living sense of the supreme worth of this conviction." Suppose yourself tempted to do a wrong. Let it be a case, like the secret withdrawing of property from one who can afford to lose it, and will never miss it; a case where no visible harm is to ensue. Immense loss, perhaps the ruin of your prospects for this world and of the happiness of those dear to you, impends, if you refuse. Why not do it? Nothing stands in the way but a feeling, which the tempter pronounces an unpractical scruple—a sentiment—perhaps, an accident of inheritance. Is it not foolish to throw away the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, for so intangible, unsubstantial a reason? You have to choose. You throw yourself on the side of the right. You decide for the feeling, against the arithmetic of consequences, against seeming expediency. You feel on the instant that in losing your life, you have saved it; that you have found your true self: you can now enter into the joy of heroic souls when, with a noble reck-

lessness, they fling away life and all for a sacred cause. But when you decide to abide by the right, come what will, it is a kind of venture. The act would lose its charm for yourself, if this voluntary element were taken out of it, if you took no risk, if you could demonstrate by a mathematical argument that which you know and feel. Equally is it true that the mind is not coerced into a belief in God. Yet we feel that to surrender this belief would be to enervate conscience, chill every holy aspiration, and bring desolation into the soul. It is true that as regards both the inviolable authority of conscience, and faith in God, we can show that the abandonment of these convictions is fatal to the higher life of man, and to the order and well-being of society. But this argument, while it corroborates, will not create, belief.

The future life, immortality, is a truth of faith. Belief in it is closely connected with belief in God. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The soul that communes with Him finds in this very relation—in the sense of its own worth implied in this relation—the assurance that it is not to perish at the dissolution of its material organs. Its life is consciously at a heaven-wide elevation above that of the brute; its destiny is proportionately higher. Whoever, with the philosopher Kant, contemplates with admiration the

starry heavens above him, and the moral law within him,—that law which reveals his connection with a spiritual order not less vast and incomprehensible than the material universe of which he sees himself to be so insignificant a part; whoever is thus overwhelmed at once with a sense of his littleness and greatness, and stands in awe before his own soul; whoever, with Pascal, takes in the immensity of the physical universe compared with which the little portion of matter which makes up his body is a drop in the ocean, while at the same moment he remembers that his thought compasses all this physical magnificence; whoever is capable of reflections like these, will, in certain moods at least, expect to survive death. In proportion as the moral and religious nature is roused to activity do we know ourselves for what we are, distinct from, and superior to, the physical organism through which we act, and which reacts upon us. We are made vividly conscious of belonging to a different order of things. "'But how do you wish us to bury you?' said Crito to Socrates. 'Just as you please,' he answered, 'if you only get hold of me and do not let me escape you.' And quietly laughing and glancing at us, he said: 'I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that this Socrates, who is now talking with you, and laying down each one of these propositions, is my very self; for his mind is full of the thought that *I* am he whom he is to see

in a little while as a corpse; and so he asks how he shall bury me.'"* A life of sense lacks this consciousness, and is thus without the attendant evidence of the soul's nature and destiny. Conscience is a prophet. Both by its promises and its forebodings, it testifies to an existence hereafter. "The dread of something after death," which implies that we are to survive death, is a solemn fact in human consciousness, with which poets, and philosophers, and all who scan human nature, are familiar. But this prediction within us we are under no compulsion to credit. If we give heed to it, it is an act of faith. There is a voice in the heart which denies the assertions of unbelief.

"If e'er, when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the heart would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath, the heart
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt.'"

The same poet, after singing the praise of knowledge:

"Who loves not knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty"——

*Phædo, 115.

goes on to say:—

> "Half-grown as yet, a child and vain,
> She cannot fight the fear of death.
> What is she, cut from love and faith,
> But some wild Pallas from the brain
>
> Of Demons? fiery hot to burst
> All barriers in her onward race
> For power. Let her know her place;
> She is the second, not the first."

Let us turn to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is often alleged that this doctrine is not affirmed in the Bible, that it is not intelligible, that it is not practical. All this, as orthodox theologians concede, is, in a certain sense, true. The Bible presents us only with the *disjecta membra* of the doctrine. It teaches, from beginning to end, that there is only one God. But it tells us that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Spirit is God. And it teaches that they are not altogether the same, but that each is distinguishable from the others severally. The sameness does not interfere with the otherness, and the otherness does not destroy the sameness. The term "Trinity" is a hieroglyph. It stands for several disconnected propositions, collectively taken. It is an algebraic sign for an unknown, mysterious relation. By this term we bring several separate truths into juxtaposition, and thus parry the inference that in affirming one we

are denying another. Without some *caveat*, it might be rashly inferred that, when we say that the Son is uncreated, we give up the truth of the unity of God. The word "person" in the formula denotes an obscure, incomplete conception. As Augustine says, "three persons are spoken of, not in order to express the truth, but in order not to keep silence respecting it." *"I could wish them," says John Calvin, that is, the words "Trinity of persons," "to be buried in oblivion, provided this faith were universally received, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the one God; and that nevertheless the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but that they are distinguished from each other by some property. I am not so rigidly precise as to be fond of contending for mere words."† But there are those who cannot endure the mystery. They cannot put up with an obscure, undefined idea. They forget that even if we say nothing of the Trinity, it is not possible for us to find out the Almighty to perfection, or even our own souls. "When Eunomius, the heretic," writes old Thomas Fuller, "vaunted that he knew God and His divinity, St. Basil gravels him in twenty-one questions about the body of a pismire." The Sabellian first comes forward to cut the knot which he cannot untie. He reduces "person" to mani-

*—"non ut illud diceretur, sed ne taceretur."—*de Trinit.*, v. 9.

† Institutes, I. xiii. 5.

festation, and starts on a path that leads out either into Pantheism, or into the humanitarian conception of Christ. The Arian prefers a secondary God, and supplants the true doctrine by a crude species of polytheism, with an incarnation attended by most of the perplexities, and none of the advantages, of the Christian conception. It is allowed, also, by competent theologians—I need to name only Chalmers and Dr. Newman—that the Trinity is not a practical truth. But they assert, with all emphasis, that the separate propositions for which that term stands as a convenient symbol, are, one and all, practical truths. It is a practical truth, for example, that there is but one God. With that assertion we are to begin. It is a practical truth that Christ is the divine Son of God: the love of the Father, and of Christ, as discovered in the Saviour's incarnation and death, is contingent on it. It lies in the background of His whole mediatorial relation. The Mediator between God and man is not a creature, is not as distant from God as we are ourselves. The Deliverer of the human race from sin and death, the author of a new spiritual creation, is not a mere man, on the level of Moses and Paul, except as He was more successful in resisting temptation. Let me say that the Nicene definitions, in giving a certain precedence to the Father, while affirming the true divinity of the Son, accord with the teaching of the

New Testament, and while they do not pretend to clear up the inscrutable mystery, are better adapted to remove practical difficulties than many later and less authoritative expositions of the subject. The Nicene confession: "*I believe in one God the Father Almighty*, maker of heaven and earth," followed, as it is, by the assertion of the Saviour's true and proper divinity, corresponds to the solemn affirmation of St. Paul, where, having said that the heathen have "gods many and lords many," he declares: "*but to us there is but one God, the Father*, of whom are all things," "and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things." (1 Cor. viii. 5.) In the Athanasian idea, though not with any Arian meaning, the Father is first—*the fons et origo divinitatis*. "For the reason," says Calvin, that "the properties in the persons bring with them an order, so that in the Father is the beginning and cause—*principium et origo*—as often as mention is made of the Father and of the Son together, or of the Spirit, the name of God is peculiarly appropriated to the Father. In this way the unity of essence is retained, and the order adhered to, whereby, however, nothing is subtracted from the deity of the Son and of the Spirit."*

Look next at the Christian doctrine of sin. Sin is

*Institutes, I. xiii. 20.

not an attribute of this or that individual exclusively, of this or that family, or nation, or generation, but of the race of mankind. Yet sin pertains to the fundamental bent or determination of the will; and the will we conceive of not as a race attribute, but as strictly personal. How can moral evil get into the will, how can the will acquire a wrong direction, save by its own act? And if it could, how would guilt be involved? Here is the problem of sin: the fact of a sin belonging to mankind in common; the truth of self-determination as essential to the will, and the ground of personal responsibility. The Pelagian springs up with his notion that the wickedness of the world—which renders it necessary that every human being should pray, as soon as he knows the meaning of the words, "Forgive us our debts"—is due to bad example, bad education. He does not ask what evil example, what our corrupt training, spring from. No matter how shallow an explanation may be, if it be only plain and consistent! Suppose that we are required to explain this seeming contradiction. We are at liberty to answer the challenge bluntly, but not unkindly,—Explain it yourself! We do not create the facts. Christianity takes things as they are. As a matter of fact, men do not acquit themselves or one another for specific wrong-doing, on account of the prevalence of sin in the race—a sin of which that wrong-doing is an

effect. Christian teachers go no farther on this subject than the wisest heathen have gone. But what will you say of infants in whom character is not yet developed? The same answer may be rendered. There is an imperceptible transition from the moral condition of the child, whatever that be, to the character that belongs to him as a man. We can point to no moment when there was a fall, a conversion to evil. The difficulty is not a whit more serious for the Christian believer, than for the unbeliever, provided the unbeliever does not shut his eyes to the palpable facts of human life. The catholic theology has never concealed its embarrassment on this subject. It has persistently refused to be driven to either extreme. A mystery overhangs the relation of the individual to the race. Christian theology falls back on this mystery. It will not bow down before syllogisms the premises of which are imperfectly comprehended, but takes its stand on the palpable facts, attested by conscience and by experience, of a general sin, coupled with personal guilt and responsibility.

Not that inquirers are to be warned off the ground. The questions involved in the Christian doctrine of sin form a legitimate subject of investigation. Here there is a debatable province in which theology has room to expatiate. Hypotheses may be broached, theories advocated, with a reasonable hope to extend the

boundaries of our knowledge, and to reconcile seeming contradictions. But care is to be taken not to trench on the main substance of the truth in any direction, not to confound solutions suggested by human ingenuity with the Christian dogma, and charitably to allow diversities of opinion in the wide district open to speculation.

The Atonement is another cardinal truth of Christianity. It emanates from the love of God; yet there is an expiation, not only a proclaiming of peace, but a making of peace, a relation to that righteous condemnation of sin in the mind of God which is reëchoed in the human conscience. "He loved us," says Calvin, quoting from Augustine, "even when we were in the exercise of enmity against Him, and engaged in the practice of iniquity. Wherefore, in a wonderful and divine manner, He both hated us and loved us at the same time."* Here the theological problem is brought before us. The passion for simplification, even if the truth has to be pared down, is at once roused. What is called the Moral View of the Atonement, when advanced as a complete description of it, is an example of this tendency. For one, I am thankful for the great store of interesting truth which Schleiermacher—I name Schleiermacher as incomparably the ablest man

* Institutes, B. II., c. xvi. 4.

of this class—and others have brought forward upon the direct relation of Christ and of His work to man. But if the exposition stop here, an element is left out. We have had few preachers in this country to equal Horace Bushnell; a man of genius, whose religious thoughts came to him in flashes of light, which may have sometimes had the effect to hinder him, for the time, from seeing their needed complement. He presented the Moral View of the work of Christ in an extensive treatise, with remarkable eloquence and felicity of illustration. Yet he appears to have been conscious of a defect, and he set about to repair it in a later Essay, in which he sought to find a place for a reflex influence of the humiliation and death of Christ upon the offended feeling of God, not otherwise to be appeased. I say nothing of the special character of this later speculation; I speak of it only as indicating an uneasy sense of the insufficiency of the Moral View, in the mind of one of its ablest expounders. Mr. James Martineau entitles an Essay in which he attacks the doctrine of the Atonement, "Mediatorial Religion." The issue may well be made on the validity, or invalidity, of the conception involved in this title. Bishop Butler has illustrated the consonance of the doctrine of salvation by a Mediator with the analogies of experience. Who doubts, let me ask, the reasonableness of intercessory prayer? But all intercessory prayer pro-

ceeds on the assumption that the supplication of one may obtain for another from God a good which might be withheld without it. Here is mediation in one form, universally recognized wherever there is piety among men. What if Christ qualified Himself to be the Intercessor by actually partaking of our penal lot, thereby realizing in consciousness both the feeling of God in view of the wrong inflicted on him, and the guilt and distress of man under the displeasure of his Maker? What if His intercession procures a boon, not otherwise to be obtained, from the love and mercy of God? Where is the absurdity in the supposition? If death be the wages of sin, as the Bible declares in words that find a response in the consciences of men, how can this particular quality or significance of death fail to enter, as a constituent element, into the experience of the dying Saviour? If just displeasure against an offender is mitigated in us by the suffering of another in his behalf, why, according to the same mysterious law, may it not be so with God? In theology alone, are we to be debarred from admitting facts until they shall be completely reduced to science?

On this subject of the Atonement there is abundant space for theological inquiry and debate, and room for differences of opinion. But here, too, the aim must be to preserve intact the essential elements of the truth which are correlative to the needs of the soul.

Better to adjourn the explication to a brighter day than to sacrifice practical truth to the exigencies of a system, or to espouse a one-sided theory simply because it is easy.

The influence exerted by the Spirit of God upon the soul is mysterious as to its mode; but not at all more mysterious than forms of personal influence where one mind is swayed by another, with which all are familiar. On the first promulgation of the Gospel, the doctrine of the influence of the Holy Spirit excited no difficulty. The general idea was one recognized by the heathen as probable. As to a clashing of this truth with the freedom of the will, we know that a particular evil habit may cling to one so obstinately that there is no help for the subject of it, except from without. Some new power must come in to inspire and fortify his resolve. He is practically helpless. Yet he is all the time responsible for his habit; and unless he can be emancipated from it, it will bring upon him, as all perceive, moral ruin. The same thing is often true of a community which is addicted to a particular vice, or is sunk low in the general tone of its principles and conduct. The means of escape must come, if at all, from some exterior influence. The guilty agents are also victims; they cannot lift themselves up to a higher plane: they

must be lifted up. A fresh breeze must blow upon them to purify the moral atmosphere. A new power must enter into them, and revive the smothered principle of virtue. In connection with the truth of the influence of the Spirit, emerges the old question of liberty and necessity. Why should the Christian believer be held accountable for clearing up a difficulty, which has not only been a subject of incessant debate in the schools, but likewise meets us equally in the daily conduct of life? He may have his theory, as any other may, or he may have none. This is a private affair of his own. He acknowledges no deeper mystery than thoughtful men are obliged to find at every turn. The Christian preacher tells one who longs to escape from sin: Pray as if it all depended on God; strive as if it all depended on yourself. To the logical difficulty that is raised by this counsel, he is not bound to render an answer. That is a question of science. Solve the seeming contradiction as you will, experience proves, in multitudes of cases, that this injunction occasions no practical perplexity. It is acted on, and with the best result.

A few words may now be said on the doctrine of the Scriptures, which are the rule of our faith and conduct. We touch here on a subject which, at the present day, excites the attention of inquisitive minds

without and within the Church. The more searching study of the Bible, and the progress of knowledge in other departments, especially in history and in natural and physical science, have brought up new questions which those who believe in Christianity and revere the Bible, yet do not pin their faith on tradition, have to consider with candor and patience. The first thing to be said is, that no one is competent to interpret the Scriptures, who cannot enter, with a living sympathy, into their spirit. I might add that one who stands outside of the Book, as it were, with no insight into its moral and religious contents, is disabled from judging one branch of the evidence relative to external questions of date and authorship. Suppose a man who is devoid of poetic feeling, but is sharp in geography and statistics, to undertake the criticism of Shakespeare. He will observe that Hamlet studies at Wittenberg long before that university was founded, that Bohemia is furnished with a sea-coast, the scene of a shipwreck, that Hector quotes Aristotle at the siege of Troy, and that Ajax Telamon is confounded with Ajax Oïleus. But the boundless store of thought and of beauty, scattered in almost reckless profusion upon the pages of his author, the mere plodder will scarcely discern. The qualities which are requisite in a critic of the Bible are parallel with such as everybody thinks essential in poetry, in the

fine arts generally, in every department where something is required beyond mere keenness and information. An unreligious critic will not get through the shell of the Bible. The "earthen vessels" in which, as the Apostle says, the treasure is hidden, he may scan, and detect every crack and blemish, but the treasure which they enclose, will escape him. On questions of chronology, on questions of history even, where his bias against the supernatural does not vitiate his reasoning, he may shed light. His investigations, if pursued in a truly scientific spirit, will have their value. But beyond a restricted field, his judgments may be wholly at fault.

Let me advert to one or two illustrations of the directly opposite judgments that may be pronounced upon the same books of Scripture. Mr. J. S. Mill refers in quite disparaging terms, in his Essays on Religion, to the Gospel of John, and especially to the discourses reported in it. The foremost of the Reformers, whom Mr. Mill himself would consider a very able man, speaks of the same book as "the chief Gospel," can hardly find words strong enough to express his delight in it; and the long discourse in the final chapters he characterizes as the "best and most comforting which the Lord Jesus uttered on earth," as "a treasure and a jewel," which the wealth of the world could not balance. Nowhere else, he says, are the

principal articles of the Christian faith so powerfully set forth. Niebuhr, a man of most vigorous intellect —and he is but one out of an uncounted number who have shared in the same conviction—clung to this Gospel with an intense love. Why do the contents of a book which address these minds with such an irresistible fascination, seem "poor stuff" to a writer whose judgments in certain departments of literature are far from being contemptible? It is because he is out of his element. The book of which he speaks in so slighting a tone lies without the circle of thought and experience in which he is at home. It is only another case where the critic really judges himself. Because he sees nothing, he infers that nothing is to be seen. One who should pronounce an oratorio of Handel, or the symphonies of Beethoven, "poor stuff," would simply prove that he had no ear for music, or that his exceptionally feeble sensibility in that direction had been left undeveloped. A man who should characterize the Madonnas of Raphael as daubs might be an authority in political economy, but mistakes his calling in assuming the rôle of a critic in Art. A cultivated author, who is of the school called "free religionists," in a recent work on the life of Christ, makes a remark to the effect that the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians are, for the most part, "intellectually arid and devoid of human interest." But these writings,

more than any other single cause, made the Protestant Reformation. What a flame they kindled in the soul of Luther! The renewed study of these short tracts convulsed Europe. At a later day, John Bunyan, after describing the remorse, and dread, and sorrow for sin, which had long tortured him, says: "Well, after many such longings in my mind, the God in whose hands are all our days and ways, did cast into my hand one day a book of Martin Luther; it was his comment on the Galatians; it, also, was so old that it was ready to fall from piece to piece if I did but turn it over." After reading but a little way, he says: "I found my condition, in his experience, so largely and profoundly handled, as if his book had been written out of my heart." This insight on the part of his author amazed Bunyan. "I do prefer," he adds, "this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience." John Wesley, after suffering long-continued anxieties of feeling on account of sin, and from want of faith in Christ, attended, on a certain evening, a meeting where a person read Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, in which the Reformer dwells on the nature of faith, and the peace that arises from it. That passage infused an altogether new trust and joy into Wesley's heart. That moment was a turning-point in his career. Methodism must be allowed to be a sub-

stantial fact. When revolutions in personal character, and mighty changes in the course of history, not in one age only, but in a long succession of ages, are directly traceable to certain books, has not the critic who finds in them little that is remarkable, some reason to suspect that the fault is in himself? May there not reside in them a power which, for some reason, he is not competent to discern?

The second remark which I have to make is that in the discussion of this grave subject, a discussion which is certain to be carried forward hereafter with even more interest than it excites now, the defenders of the Gospel have to guard against the intrusion of a Rationalistic tendency into their conception of the Scriptures and of Inspiration. We may safely say that the distress of mankind, considered in connection with what natural religion discloses of the character of God, affords some ground for expecting a Revelation. At least, we are debarred from pronouncing a Revelation impossible, and are reasonably required to attend to the pretensions of a system that has the obvious and acknowledged excellence of Christianity. But everything warns us to be cautious about going too far on the *a priori* road. Things, in a thousand particulars, are not what we might have expected them to be. The Roman Catholic theologian argues *a priori* for the authority of the Church, and now for the infallibility

of the Pope, from the need of an unerring interpreter to remedy the infirmities of human reason—an umpire at hand to end the strife. Will not the benevolent Being who gave the Revelation provide a living guide for the understanding of it, a safeguard against corruption, and against endless controversies about its meaning?

From these confident anticipations in regard to what God will do, I turn with satisfaction to the discreet utterances of Butler:

"As we are in no sort judges beforehand, by what laws or rules, in what degree or by what means, it were to have been expected that God would naturally," —*i. e.*, by the use of our natural powers—"instruct us; so upon supposition of His affording us light and instruction by revelation, additional to what He has afforded us by reason and experience, we are in no sort judges, by what methods, and in what proportion, it were to be expected that this supernatural light and instruction would be afforded us." We know not beforehand," Butler proceeds to say, "what knowledge God would afford men by natural means, what power or disposition they would have to communicate it, what sort of evidence it would rest upon, whether or not it would be equally clear to all; whether reason, the power of apprehending it, would be given at once, or gradually." "In like manner," he goes on to say,

"we are wholly ignorant what degree of new knowledge it were to be expected God would give mankind by revelation, upon supposition of His affording one; or in how far, or in what way, He would interpose miraculously to qualify them, to whom He should originally make the revelation, for communicating the knowledge given by it; and to secure their doing it to the age in which they should live, and to secure its being transmitted to posterity. We are equally ignorant . . . . whether the scheme would be revealed at once, or unfolded gradually. Nay, we are not in any sort able to judge whether it were to have been expected, that the Revelation should have been committed to writing; or left to be handed down, and consequently corrupted, by verbal tradition, and at length sunk under it, if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they will." "And thus we see that the only question concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it be a real revelation; not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for: and, concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be; not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulged as weak men are apt to fancy a book containing a divine revelation should." This wise theologian appeals to our experience as regards the knowledge imparted

by nature and our own faculties, to prove that "upon supposition God should afford men some additional instruction by revelation, it would be with circumstances, in manners, degrees, and respects, which we should be apt to fancy we had great objections against the credibility of."* We find nature to be different from what we should have expected; why not Revelation? Is it not better to humbly inquire what God has actually done? We may find reasons afterward for His procedure which would not have occurred to us beforehand. The reasoning of Butler is a protest against orthodox, as well as heterodox, Rationalism. Even on the low ground of policy, with regard to the most feasible means of repelling assaults upon Christianity, the humbler path of investigation and of taking things as they are, is, in the long run, the most prudent. Find out what is tenable, and what is not; waste no strength in trying to hold indefensible positions; concentrate your forces at the main points: these are accepted maxims in military art.

To test the justice of Butler's teaching, I will ask each one to carry himself back to the moment when Christ, having risen from the dead, bade adieu to His disciples. Shut the book of history now, and tell me what that chosen band will do? What will God do to preserve and transmit the knowledge which they are

* Analogy, P. II., c. iii.

possessed of, and to provide for its due authentication? Should we not suppose that the Eleven would at once assemble, that each of them would recall what he could of the Master's words and acts, that they would together make up a full, consecutive narrative, sign it, attest it by a solemn united affidavit, cause copies to be multiplied by careful transcription, and provide for their being handed down to those who were to come after? Had this been done, how different a thing what we call "the Evidences of Christianity" would be! Had the course described been actually pursued, we should certainly have *a priori* arguments in abundance to demonstrate that no other course was to be expected, and that no other would be worthy of God. How different is the fact from the probable human anticipation! Three out of five of the histories in the New Testament are written by persons who were not Apostles. One of them in his old age, brings together precious recollections of his Master; embracing, however, but a small fraction of what He said and did. One other, at an earlier date, makes up a brief report of discourses, or of discourses and historical memoranda connected with them. The two other narrators record what they can gather up from Apostles and others who knew Jesus. One of them writes for the benefit of an individual. I deny not that there was a wise Providence in all this. There was a wise and vigilant

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Providence; and I believe that the proof of Christianity is stronger than it would have been under the supposition made above. Imagine the objections that would be raised, had the Gospel history been framed in the set way just described! "Here was a conclave of the Apostles," it would be said. "They were committed to the cause: their own credit was at stake. Who was there to cross-examine them? One or two leading ones would carry the rest with them. Very likely Peter would be the one to draw up the narrative. He could talk down opposition. But what of his trustworthiness? He had told an untruth in denying his connection with Christ. If he could falsify on one side, he could on the other. Look at his duplicity at Antioch! How he was exposed by Paul! Who were the copyists? What a chance there for alterations!" These objections, or others of a piece with them, would have been loudly uttered. On the whole, we may be satisfied that the Gospel record, though an inestimable gift of God, almost appears to have made itself. The facts were told here and there, by individuals, each for himself, with no collusion or combination. They were believed in, and by so many, that written records of them were soon called for; so that these present, in an artless form, the testimony of eye-witnesses, which they had given independently of one another, before there was a thought of committing it to writing, at

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least as a continuous narrative. On the surface it looks as if these inconceivably precious facts had been left to take their chance of being written down, and transmitted to later generations. God has chosen a method of preserving and diffusing the knowledge of His revelation, which is very different from the method which you and I would have chosen for Him. Herein is a rebuke for the presumption which undertakes to prescribe the way in which the truth of the Gospel must be given and received, and a monition to form our opinions on this momentous subject, by a diligent, honest, reverent examination of the Bible itself, in the light of the verified knowledge which God affords us from whatever quarter.

The authority of the Bible as our guide in religion is not an arbitrary dogma. Nor is it reasonable for an individual to restrict that authority by the limits of his own insight, at a particular time, into the truth contained in the Bible. He does not limit, in this way, his confidence in any master in human science. He takes the position of a learner. He does not expect to see into everything in a moment. He takes it for granted that there may be a force and a meaning which he is not yet far enough advanced to discern. This is true of every branch of knowledge. It is eminently true in departments where æsthetic perception comes into play. Nothing more evinces a puerile

conceit than the hasty verdicts of uncultivated people on great productions in literature and art. It is the novice turning teacher. Now the Bible has proved itself to be a treasure-house of wisdom and knowledge. It does not open up its meaning all at once. It meets the soul in every emergency,—in temptation, in bereavement, in disappointment, in the prospect of death,—with some life-giving word before unnoticed. As one moves through the experiences of human life, the reading of the Bible is a constant surprise. In every new situation, we hear the voice of one who has been there before us. The pages of the Bible—I dare say the simile has been often suggested before—are like sheets written with invisible ink, on which, when exposed to the heat, messages of love and warning come out in bold, distinct characters. Doctrines of the Bible that seemed unintelligible or repulsive, are capable of assuming another aspect. And so—to quote the familiar words of Bacon, in the Advancement of Learning—"we ought not to draw down and submit the mysteries of God to our reason, but contrariwise to raise and advance our reason to the divine truth."

Modern study has brought into full view the human element in the Bible. Its books are redolent of the country where they were written. They are alive with human feeling. The distinctive qual-

ities of their authors, their intellectual habit, their personal tone and spirit, their education and circumstances, are reflected in every line. Isaiah is not Jeremiah, John is not Paul, and Paul is not James. The lyrics of David and the Psalmists are not the ethics of Solomon and the proverb writers. But, however serious may be the task of formulating the doctrine of Inspiration, with reference to the Old Testament and the New, to writings hortatory and argumentative, to song, and history, and prophecy, several things are evident. One is that through this collection of books, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, as "thro' the ages,"

——"one increasing purpose runs."

"It is first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." "*Novum testamentum in vetere latet; vetus testamentum in novo patet.*" Another thing evident is that the fundamental truths of the Christian system are imbedded in Scripture too deep to be disturbed by varying phases of theory respecting it. The fact of sin, of the estrangement of mankind from God, the Incarnation and the Atonement, the Mission and Indwelling of the Spirit, stand upon no single proof-text; they enter into the warp and woof of Scripture. Another truth on this subject is that, in all essential things, the Scripture interprets and per-

fects itself. The Old Testament is to be read in the light of the New. In the Bible there are books which are like the main, central organs in the human body. Of this character are the Psalms and Isaiah, the teaching of Christ in the Synoptists, the Gospel and First Epistle of John, the leading Epistles of Paul, especially the Romans and the Galatians. They concentrate in themselves the essential spirit of Revelation; the vital substance of its doctrine. In them are contained the criteria for determining the function of other portions of inspired Scripture, which, however important in their place, may not have an equal regulative office. History and doctrine, let me add, are linked together. The doctrinal system presupposes a history. The prophets in the old dispensation, and the apostles in the new, did not, on a sudden, start up from the ground, with no antecedent history to prepare the way.

The great argument for Christianity is Christianity itself. But for the argument to have effect, it must be no single member, no isolated feature of the system, that is held up to view. The pure morals of the Gospel, the perfect example of Christ, the humane, elevating influence of His teaching, the attractive idea presented of the character of God,—not either of these apart, not even all of them taken together, suffice to

give to that argument its overpowering force. We must look at all in the light of the one comprehensive design of Christianity, We must contemplate the end which it undertakes to accomplish. It is nothing less than the redemption of mankind from sin and death. As an idea simply, how sublime it is! How infinitely does it transcend the most daring dream of philosophers, moralists, reformers! Not this or that kind of sin alone—as misrule, cruelty, impurity, fraud —is aimed at; but sin itself is to be extirpated from human nature. Not one kind of distress alone, but death, the anticipation of which keeps the guilty heart of man all his life-time in bondage to fear, is to be stripped of its terror, and made harmless, like a conquered enemy. The whole burden that weighs upon mankind is to be lifted off. The recovery of the world from the slavery of sin and from its condemnation, to the freedom of the children of God—what human mind could have even dreamed of such an achievement as within the limits of possibility? This is the Gospel, the good tidings. Regarded from this point of view, it bears on itself the stamp of its divine origin. The Deliverer Himself was a man; but He could be no mere man. It is credible that he was what He professed to be—the Son of God.

I bring these remarks to a close. They are little

more than hints which I leave you to follow out for yourselves. I congratulate you, Gentlemen, that these inspiring studies are to be your lifelong occupation. "In our profession," to quote the noble words of Robert Hall, "the full force and vigor of the mind may be exerted on that which will employ it forever; on religion, the final centre of repose, the goal to which all things tend, which gives to time all its importance, apart from which man is a shadow, his very existence a riddle, and the stupendous scenes which surround him, as incoherent and unmeaning as the leaves which the Sibyl scattered in the wind."*

* Hall's Works, Vol. II. p. 153.

APPENDIX.

I.

THE TEACHING OF THEOLOGY ON THE MORAL BASIS OF FAITH.

The masters of theology in all ages have generally taught that a living faith, as contrasted with an intellectual assent to propositions whether of fact or of doctrine, springs out of the heart; that the existence or non-existence of such faith is contingent on the state of the affections and the will; and that, in many instances, the only remedy for scepticism of the intellect is to be found in a change of the moral temper, or in an altered bent of the will.

This is the philosophy of Augustine. But in his case, as in the Schoolmen afterwards, the treatment of the subject of faith is somewhat confused by the view taken of the authority of the Visible Church. Faith is partly the loyal acceptance of the Church as the authorized and qualified guide, and partly that immediate sense of the truth and excellence of the Gospel, and of its adaptedness to the wants of the soul, which avails to triumph over all doubts. Augustine began

with a restless seeking after God; and in this craving for a supernal good, in his view, the religious life in sinful men must take its rise. This is a distinctively moral feeling, not mere intellectual curiosity. But tossed as he had been from one opinion to another, he felt the need of a present, authoritative voice to still the tumult within; and this he recognized in the Catholic Church. Here, again, it was not external criteria alone, such as miracles, the succession of bishops in the Apostolic sees, and the like, which satisfied him that the Church could be trusted; but it was the victory which he saw that Christianity, as preserved and transmitted in the Church, had gained, in spite of all obstacles, in the Roman world, and the ennobling, purifying influence which had gone forth from the Gospel and the Church upon individual souls and upon society. Here, once more, was a moral source of conviction. "Christianity and the Church," to quote from Neander, "and, indeed, the Church under this particular form of constitution, were confounded in his view. What he might justly regard as a witness for the divine, world-transforming power of the Gospel, appeared to him as a witness for the divine authority of the visible, universal Church; and he did not consider that the Gospel truth would have been able to bring about effects equally great, by its inherent divine power, in some other vessel in which it could

have been diffused among mankind; nay, that it would have been able to produce still purer and mightier effects, had it not been in many ways disturbed and checked in its operation by the impure and confining vehicle of its transmission."* The maxims, Faith precedes knowledge; Believe that you may understand — "Fides præcedit intellectum;" "Crede, ut intelligas"—which were adopted by the Schoolmen, are found, in these very words, in Augustine. I believe that I may understand—"Credo, ut intelligam"—the noted saying of Anselm, is thus almost verbally identical with sentences of the father of Latin theology. Although the authority of the Church, and, on that ground, the truth of the complex system of doctrines which the Church inculcated, were held to deserve immediate acknowledgment, yet, as we have said above, the intrinsic excellence of the Gospel itself, and the love immediately evoked by it in the soul, were made prominent as the sources of a living faith. The truth, it was held, shines in its own light. The practical experience of the Gospel, in its enlightening and saving power, was held to be the prerequisite of the intellectual comprehension of it. Experience was put first; science afterwards. It was Anselm, the first of the eminent mediæval expounders of the relation of faith to reason, who said: "He who

* Church History, vol. II. p. 241.

has not believed, has not experienced, and he who has not experienced, will not understand."

"Faith," says St. Bernard, "is a certain voluntary and assured prelibation of the truth," not yet made explicit or reduced to science. The heart anticipates the understanding, not waiting for intellectual analysis. Alexander of Hales says that in religion the relation of knowledge and believing is the reverse of that which exists in other sciences, because in religion faith creates the reason; it is the argument which makes the reason; it is the light of the soul—*lumen animarum*—which makes it perspicacious to find out the reasons by which the things of faith are proved. There is an inward certitude, founded on love, or the surrender of the heart to the truth, which is distinct from conviction on purely intellectual grounds. Bonaventura, the great doctor of the Franciscans, founds the conviction that is in faith, not on logical demonstrations, but on love to that which is presented as the object of faith. It is the contents of the truth, not external verifications, that carry the assent of the soul. Albert the Great makes religious faith, as distinguished from theoretical certainty, to be an immediate persuasion of the truth, where we are attracted by the object of faith, in the same manner that the will is determined by the moral law.

"The merit of faith," says Hugo of St. Victor,

"consists in the fact that our conviction is determined by the affections, when no adequate knowledge is yet present. By faith, we render ourselves worthy of knowledge, as perfect knowledge is the final reward of faith in the life eternal." William of Paris separates that faith which springs from a rational knowledge of the object, an intellectual comprehension, from that which springs from the virtue of the believer, or his temper of heart. He speaks of a "fortitude which overcomes the darkness of incoming doubt, and by its own light scatters the clouds of unbelief."*

The Reformers, while discarding the Scholastic doctrine of the authority of the Church, were penetrated with the conviction that a living faith has an immediate source deeper than the understanding. As to the existence of God, Calvin says: "We lay it down as a position not to be controverted that the human mind, even by natural instinct, possesses some sense of a Deity." "The minds of men are fully possessed with this common principle"—the sense of religion—"which is closely interwoven with their original composition." He speaks of our "propensity to religion," of the "innate persuasion" which men have of the divine existence, a persuasion inseparable from their very constitution;" a perception which sin

* On the Religious Philosophy of the Schoolmen, see Neander, Church History, vol. iv., p. 367 seq.

has never wholly extinguished. "No man can take a survey of himself but he must immediately turn to the contemplation of God, in whom he 'lives and moves'; since it is evident that the talents which we possess are not from ourselves, and that our very existence is nothing else but a subsistence in God alone."*

Melanchthon, the author of the principal doctrinal treatise in the Lutheran Church, says, on the same subject: "God desires to be known and worshiped; and the clear and sure knowledge of God would have flashed upon the mind of men, had human nature remained sound." Now the minds of men wander "in a great and gloomy mist, inquiring whether there be a God, whether there be a Providence, and what is the will of God."†

Faith, as is well known, is a great theme with Luther. That the source of inward certitude with respect to religious truth, does not lie in the understanding, but in the relation of that truth to the appetencies of the soul, is asserted in every variety of form. Take out this general idea from Luther's discussions of the subject, and no Luther would be left. He plants himself upon the Word of God, but it is to the conscience and heart that the Word comes home with power. The understanding, left to itself, is a blind and false guide. No words are too strong for

* Institutes, B. I., i. 1., iii. 1, 2, 3. † Loci Theol., *de Deo*.

Luther to express his scorn for reason, taken in this sense. The Protestant theology taught that the truth of the Scriptures is apprehended in a penetrating, living way, only through "the testimony of the Holy Spirit," who gave it. The Spirit that inspired the sacred writers must move on the heart of the reader. Otherwise, he stands on the outside, and will never get beyond an intellectual assent to the facts and propositions which they record. It may be that he will not even reach that.

Pascal's philosophy of religion turns on the distinction between the functions of the heart and of the understanding. The understanding by itself leads to pyrrhonism, because the understanding goes out of its province. If there is to be religious knowledge, God must not only reveal or communicate Himself, but, also, that in man which is related to God must be open to the reception of Him. This holds good of the revelation of God in the creation, as truly as of the disclosure of Himself in the Scriptures. There is no coercive revelation, no light to which the eyes cannot be closed, no demonstrated truth. There is a mingling of light and shade in the revelation which God makes of Himself, to the end that the effect of it may not be irresistible. If it is true that He reveals Himself, it is also true that He hides Himself. He will be found of those who seek Him. "I wonder at the boldness with which

men speak of God, in addresses to the irreligious. Their first undertaking is to prove the Deity by the works of nature. I should not be astonished at their undertaking, if they were addressing their discourses to believers; for it is certain that all those who have a living faith in their hearts, see at once that there is nothing which is not the work of God whom they worship. But it is otherwise with those in whom this light is quenched, and in whom it is desired to revive it, persons destitute of faith and of grace, who seeking, with all the light they have, for everything in nature which can lead to this knowledge, find only obscurity and darkness: to say to these that they have only to look at the least thing in the world, and they will see God unveiled, and to give them, as the whole proof of this great and important subject, the course of the moon or of the planets, and to pretend to have completed the proof by such a discourse,—this is only to furnish them occasion to think that the proofs of our religion are very feeble; and I perceive, both by reason and experience, that nothing is better adapted to make them despise it. It is not in this way that the Scripture, which is better acquainted with the things of God, speaks. On the contrary, it says that He is a hidden God; and that, since the corruption of nature, He has left men in a blindness from which they can only escape by Jesus Christ, without whom all com-

munication with God is closed: 'No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son shall reveal Him.' It is this which is signified by the Scripture when it says, in so many places, that those who seek God find Him. No one speaks in this way of a light which shines as bright as mid-day. We do not say that those who seek for the daylight at noon, or for water in the sea, will find them. And so it cannot be that such is the evidence of God in nature."* Elsewhere he says: "there is light enough for those who desire to see, and darkness enough for those of an opposite temper." "God would rather make the will, than the mind, susceptible. Perfect clearness would aid the mind and be harmful to the will." The difficulties in the evidences of Christianity and theology are to be frankly admitted: they are a part of the discipline of faith. The deep meaning of an Epistle of Paul is opened up only in the heart of a believer. With him the acquaintance with it is not a mere act of memory. A man must, so to speak, live himself into religion. He must feel his way. The consideration of outward nature, at the best, could only make one a Deist. But "the God of the Christians is a God who makes the soul feel that He is its only good; that all its rest is in Him, and that it will have no joy except in loving Him; and who, at the same time, makes him

*Pensées, c. xxii. (ed. Louandre, p. 325).

hate the obstacles which hold him back, and prevent him from loving God with all his strength."* Christianity, Pascal teaches, accomplishes two things: it makes a man know that there is a God for whom men are susceptible, and that in their nature there is a corruption which makes them unworthy of Him. The consideration of himself and of the world should bring man to Christ as his Redeemer, and through Christ he will learn to find God everywhere and to understand Him. Such is the religious philosophy which satisfied the genius of Pascal.

That faith includes a sense, or spiritual recognition of the excellence of its objects, is fundamental in the religious and ethical philosophy of President Edwards. I quote but one out of numberless passages where it is asserted. "If the evidence of the gospel depended only on history, and such reasonings as learned men only are capable of, it would be above the reach of far the greatest part of mankind. But persons with but an ordinary degree of knowledge are capable, without a long and subtile train of reasoning, to see the divine excellency of the things of religion: they are capable of being taught by the Spirit of God as well as learned men. The evidence that is this way obtained is vastly better and more satisfying than all that can be obtained by the arguings of those that are most learned, and

* Ibid., c. xxii.

greatest masters of reason. And babes are as capable of knowing these things as the wise and prudent; and they are often hid from these when they are revealed to those."*

The modern evangelical theology of Germany, as a reaction against Rationalism, started first from Schleiermacher, who had been preceded, to some extent, by Jacobi. In very important particulars, Schleiermacher's conception of religion has been modified by the eminent theologians who have come after, and who have known how to unite a genuine scientific spirit with evangelical belief. But in the radical idea of faith as having roots of its own in the moral and religious nature, they agree with one another, and with the great genius to whom, however much they may differ from him, they consciously owe so much. This remark is true of such men as Twesten, Nitzsch, Neander, Tholuck, Julius Müller, Rothe, Dorner. The conflict with Rationalism in Germany led to a deeper appreciation of the nature of religion, and to views more in consonance with the thoughts of Luther, and of profound thinkers in the Church from the beginning.

In England, it is Coleridge, more than any other writer, who, by calling up the old divines, and by his own teaching, has done much to promote a like re-

* Works, vol. iv. p. 449 (Sermon on Spiritual Light).

generation of theology. The two characteristic points in Coleridge's philosophy of religion are the distinction between Nature and Spirit, and the distinction between Understanding and Reason. The doctrine of the free, self-determining power of the spirit, itself involves an immediate recognition of a fact of consciousness, a fact *sui generis;* the will, in its very idea, presupposing an exemption from the law of cause and effect which extends over Nature. Coleridge's idea of Reason mingles in it elements suggested by Kant and Jacobi. It is defined as "the mind's eye," of which realities, not creatures of fancy, are the objects. It is the organ of the supersensuous, by which truths are beheld which neither the senses, nor the understanding which deals with the materials provided by sense, furnish. Faith is defined generally as "fidelity to our own being—so far as such being is not and can not become an object of the senses," together with its concomitants. The first recognition of conscience by ourselves partakes of the nature of an act. Through conscience, which commands and dictates, we know ourselves to be agents. "We take upon ourselves an allegiance, and consequently the obligation of fealty; and this fealty, or fidelity, implying the power of being unfaithful, is the first and fundamental sense of Faith." The preservation of our loyalty and fealty amid the seductions of sense and of sin constitutes the second

sense of Faith. And the third is what is presupposed in the human conscience, the acknowledgment of God, the rightful Superior whose will conscience reveals, duty to whom imparts their obligatory force to all other duties.* We believe in God because it is our duty to believe in Him. "The wonderful works of God in the sensible world are a perpetual discourse, reminding me of His existence, and shadowing out to me His perfections. But as all language presupposes in the intelligent hearer or reader those primary notions which it symbolizes; as well as the power of making those combinations of these primary notions which it represents, and excites us to combine; even so I believe that the notion of God is essential to the human mind; that it is called forth into distinct consciousness principally by the conscience, and auxiliarily by the manifest adaptation of means to ends in the outward creation. It is, therefore, evident to my reason, that the existence of God is absolutely and necessarily insusceptible of a scientific demonstration, and that Scripture has so represented it. For it commands us to believe in one God. *I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods than me.* Now all commandment necessarily relates to the will; whereas all scientific demonstration is independent of the will, and is apodictic or demonstrative only as far

* Essay on Faith (Shedd's ed.,) vol. v., p. 557 seq.

as it is compulsory on the mind, *volentem, nolentem.*" * With Coleridge, it is the intrinsic character of Christianity, not the external proof, which leads the way in inspiring a conviction that God is its author. As "to matters of faith, to the verities of religion," in the belief of these "there must always be somewhat of moral election, 'an act of will in it as well as of the understanding, as much love in it as discursive power. True Christian faith must have in it something of inevidence, something that must be made up by duty and obedience.'" † The quotation included is from Jeremy Taylor. In another place, Coleridge exclaims: "Evidences of Christianity! I am weary of the word. Make a man feel the want of it; rouse him, if you can, to the self-knowledge of his need of it; and you may safely trust it to its own evidence; remembering only the express declaration of Christ Himself: 'No man cometh to me, unless the Father leadeth him.'" ‡ Of the principles which underlie all specific precepts of the Bible, Coleridge writes: "From the very nature of those principles, as taught in the Bible, they are understood in exact proportion as they are believed and felt. The regulator is never separated from the main-spring. For the words of the Apostle are literally and philosophically true: *We* (that is, the human race) *live by faith.* Whatever we do or know that in

* Vol. v. p. 15. † Vol. i. p. 323. ‡ Vol. i. p. 363.

kind is different from the brute creation, has its origin in a determination of the reason to have faith and trust in itself. This is the first act of faith, is scarcely less than identical with its own being." *

Among living theologians no one has set forth the moral basis of faith with more philosophical depth than Dr. John Henry Newman. Faith, a living faith, "lives in, and from, a desire after those things which it accepts and confesses." "Philosophers, ancient and modern, who have been eminent in physical science have not unfrequently shown a tendency to infidelity." "Unless there be a pre-existent and independent interest in the inquirer's mind, leading him to dwell on the phenomena which betoken an Intelligent Creator, he will certainly follow out those which terminate in the hypothesis of a settled order of nature and self-sustained laws." "The practical safeguard against Atheism in the case of scientific inquirers is the inward need and desire, the inward experience of that Power, existing in the mind before and independently of their examination of His material world." "Faith is a process of the Reason, in which so much of the grounds of inference cannot be exhibited, so much lies in the character of the mind itself, in its general view of things, its estimate of the probable and the improbable, its impressions concerning God's will,

* Vol. i. p. 323.

and its anticipations derived from its own inbred wishes, that it will ever seem to the world irrational and despicable;—till, that is, the event confirms it." "Can it, indeed, be doubted that the great majority of those who have sincerely and deliberately given themselves to religion, who take it for their portion, and stake their happiness upon it, have done so, not on an examination of evidence, but from a spontaneous movement of their hearts towards it?" Faith "is said, and rightly, to be a venture, to involve a risk." "We *believe* because we *love*. How plain a truth!" "The safeguard of Faith is a right state of heart. This it is that gives it birth; it also disciplines it." "Why does he"—the believer—"feel the message to be probable? Because he has a love for it. ..... He has a keen sense of the excellence of the message, of its desirableness, of its likeness to what it seems to him Divine Goodness would vouchsafe, did He vouchsafe any, of the need of a Revelation, and its probability." God, "for whatever reason, exercises us with the less evidence when He might give us the greater." ..... "perchance by the defects of the evidence He is trying our love of its matter." Faith "rests on the evidence of testimony, weak in proportion to the excellence of the blessing attested."* These quotations, after what I have said on preceding pages, need no comment.

* University Sermons, pp. 193, 194, 203, 216, 225, 234, 236.

II.

THE DOCTRINE OF NESCIENCE RESPECTING GOD.

That there is a First Cause, an eternal, self-existent being, the source whence all things spring, is implied in the intuitive idea of cause. Something eternal must have existed; otherwise nothing could exist now. An infinite series of existences, each produced by the one before it, gives no true causal agency, and thus fails to satisfy the rational demand for a real cause. The mind is simply set off on a fruitless chase where there is no goal. Only an uncaused cause, or a self-existent, eternal being, corresponds to the rational demand, and gives rest to the mind.

This is substantially conceded at the present day by the class known as agnostics. The question is, What are the attributes of this eternal being? Is the First Cause intelligent and moral? Here we are met by the assertion that the First Cause is utterly unknowable. It is declared to be impossible for us to make any assertion respecting its nature. In particular, we

are forbidden to consider the First Cause to be a person. All such representations are pronounced anthropomorphic, or the offspring of the groundless fancy that the cause of all things is like ourselves. Mr. Herbert Spencer goes so far as to call the belief in the personality of God, that is, the ordinary Christian faith on this subject, "impious."

One ground of this surprising assertion is the alleged inconceivability of the "Infinite." "The infinite" is a metaphysical abstraction, and is nothing real whatever. What we have to inquire into is the meaning of this term as the predicate of a being or of some attribute of a being. Space offers the readiest example of an infinite, and by looking at our idea of space we can see the extent of our power to apprehend what is denoted by this term. First, it is clear that we cannot picture with the imagination the infinitude of space. We can thus represent mentally a given portion of space, and we can extend this portion by addition indefinitely. But in this process we can come to no limit, for the obvious reason that space has no limit.

Neither can we *conceive* of space as infinite, if it be meant that we set boundaries round the object. Space is one object; it is not an individual in a class; and thus imagination and conception with respect to it coincide.

Shall we say then that our idea of the infinite as

predicated of space, is simply an expression of our impotence to find a limit, to reach in our travels through immensity a place beyond which we cannot go? More than this is included in our cognition. Not only are we conscious of an inability in ourselves to reach a limit in imagination; we know that there is no limit to be reached. Our assertion goes beyond a confession of our own weakness, and includes a positive affirmation respecting the object, respecting space itself,—viz., that it is boundless. We have a belief positive in its character, a conception incomplete, or inchoate, which is a state of mind removed, on the one hand, from nescience, and, on the other, from full or adequate comprehension. We know infinite space, but we know it imperfectly, obscurely. It is incomprehensible, yet not a zero to our apprehension.

In the same manner, we may know the infinitude of the attributes of God, of His power and His other perfections, without comprehending them. We are not driven to choose between the two extremes of complete ignorance and complete knowledge.

Personality involves no curtailment of infinitude, as long as the world is absolutely dependent upon the will of God for its being, and when all limitation upon the exertion of His power is a self-limitation on His part.

Secondly, it is objected that Christian theism fallaciously assumes that the cause is like the effect, that

God is like ourselves. "If for a moment," says Spencer,—referring to Paley's illustration of the watch—"we make the grotesque supposition that the tickings and other movements of a watch constituted a kind of consciousness; and that a watch possessed of such a consciousness insisted upon regarding a watchmaker's actions as determined like its own by springs and escapements; we should only complete a parallel of which religious teachers think much." The parallel fails, since religious teachers do not ascribe to God limbs and other physical organs. Spencer's remark has no force except on the materialistic *petitio principii* that consciousness is nothing but a function of the bodily organs. If there were a thinking principle in a watch, which could adjust its movements at will, and act upon it and through it, as the mind of man acts upon his body, finding in it arrangements adapted to his needs and purposes, then this thinking principle, or mind in the watch, would refer it to an intelligent maker. If the cause need not be *like* the effect, it must nevertheless be related to the effect; it must be an *adequate* cause. This requires us to assume a designer wherever there is order, or the adaptedness of means to ends, since prevision is implied in the cause which produces it.

There is no escape from this reasoning on the ground of the alleged relativity of our knowledge.

If this phrase means that all that we know we know through our faculties of knowledge, none will deny it. If, for this reason, our knowledge is denied to be real, or objectively valid, this is scepticism, and must equally debar us from believing that there is a First Cause. All our knowledge, including the assumption of "the unknowable," goes overboard at once. A like remark is to be made of the alleged growth of the intellectual principle, or its evolution from animal instinct. We are in possession of this principle, whatever may be the method of its origin. Discredit it, and all our science vanishes into thin air. Do we know that there is a First Cause? If so, we know, also, that this cause is moral and intelligent, since the effects are such as imply these qualities. An inadequate cause, a cause in its nature standing in no rational relation to its effects, is equivalent to no cause. The peculiarity of the effects is left unexplained.

If we looked on the conceptions formed by us of God as fully coincident with reality, if we imputed to Him the infirmities inseparable from a finite mind, and regarded our operations of thought as an exact representation of His, we might be charged with an offensive anthropomorphism. But this charge does not hold against the assumption that He is a Spirit, an Agent acting intelligently; for this the effects of His action plainly reveal Him to be.

III.

THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION IN ITS RELATION TO THE ARGUMENT OF DESIGN.

Evolution, as a method of accounting for the origination of living beings in Nature, and of physical changes, stands in contrast with the idea of separate acts of creation by the immediate fiat of God, or by His direct interference. When applied in zoology, it means that the different kinds of animals are genetically connected with one another, just as individuals of the same species have commonly been acknowledged to be. It signifies that the different species arise, not by a special fiat calling each into being independently, but by transmutation, there being a genealogical relationship between them. As regards the origin of individuals, it is as if there were only one species, embracing the animals that are now alive, and such as have lived in the past. Among the scientific men who adopt the theory of Evolution, there are wide diversities of opinion as to the extent to which it is justly applicable

to explain the origin of the various groups of natural objects. Some deem it necessary to suppose special exertions of creative agency at particular points of transition in the history of animal life. Many would regard the introduction of man upon the stage of being as constituting one of those epochs. Mr. Darwin believes that animal life, including the human species, is traceable to a few primitive germs, possibly to one. Others think that evolution provides a bridge to span the interval between animal and vegetable, and even between vegetable and inorganic existences, and assume as probable a continuous process extending back from the highest living being to the formless material of which the world was originally composed. Few, if any, however, would maintain that so sweeping an hypothesis can claim, in the present state of knowledge, any higher rank than belongs to a conjecture. That life is developed out of inorganic matter, or that man is the offspring of a lower animal, are certainly not as yet fully established or universally accepted truths of science.

It is obvious that the doctrine of Evolution relates to the extent of the operation of second causes, or efficient causes, in the production of the world as we see it—the cosmos. That doctrine does not touch the question of the ultimate origin of the world; it does not necessarily touch the question whether the world,

as we behold it, is the fruit of a designing mind; nor does it affirm or deny the continuous co-operative agency of God in the processes of nature. Physical and natural science, as such, has nothing to do with religion. Its field of inquiry is second causes. In exploring for links of causal connection between the objects of nature, it is engaged in its proper work. Wherever it judges it impossible to find such links, it must say so. But science is right in never giving up the search so long as there is any probability of success; and nothing is more unreasonable than to raise an outcry against a man like Mr. Darwin for broaching the hypothesis of a common descent of animals, and for adducing the evidence which leads him to favor it. If there be any thing in that hypothesis to affect the doctrine of theism, it must be in collateral assertions which are sometimes made in connection with it. It does not inhere in the theory itself. When a human being is born into the world, the proofs of a designing Creator are not in the least weakened by the fact that he comes into existence by ordinary generation, and that physiological science can explain the successive stages of his embryonic life. What is true of the individual in relation to his kind, is equally true of one species in relation to another. We may take an illustration from one of the triumphs of modern inventive genius, the printing-press. A huge roll of blank paper is at one

end of a machine; at the other end there are thrown out the newspapers, in large double sheets, each of the right dimensions, printed on both sides, counted out in separate parcels, or neatly folded, in readiness for the mails. The whole operation of supplying the stereotype plates with a due quantity of ink, of cutting the paper into separate sheets of the requisite dimensions, of printing it, first on one side and then on the other, and of folding each sheet in a suitable manner, is done by the machinery, without human interference. The marks of design in the machine are not diminished, they are rather increased, by the circumstance that no interference is required. The machine at present used in the *New York Tribune* office does not put the supplement, in case one is printed, into the main sheet. That work must be done, if done at all, by hand. But they are now constructing a printing-press which will perform this additional task also, without human aid. Who will say that this additional perfection in the machine lessens the evidences of design in connection with the production of the newspaper? This analogy, be it observed, is not intended to illustrate the probable relation of the agency of God to what we call second causes—as if He stood without, and merely watched their operation. It is intended simply to show that extraordinary interpositions are not necessary to the proof of design, and that the absence of

such interferences raises no presumption on the side of atheism. It is obvious that the more complete and ingenious the mechanism in any invention of man, the less need there is of special assistance in the working of it.

Proceeding now on the supposition that nature's method is that of evolution, the question is whether the order that we behold, the cosmos, the manifold examples of apparent adaptation of means to ends, justify the impression, which has been made on the generality of mankind in all ages, that the world was planned, or that forethought and design have been exercised in the framing of it. Behind the instrumentalities, the efficient causes, or acting through them, is there evidence of a directing intelligence? The alternative of design is chance. But, confining our attention for the moment, to the Darwinian theory, it is impossible to refer the animal kingdom to the agency of chance; quite as much so as on the old conception of the radical distinction of species. "The issue," as Professor Gray correctly remarks, "between the sceptic and the theist is only the old one, long ago argued out—namely, whether organic nature is a result of design or of chance. Variation and natural selection open no third alternative; they concern only the question how the results, whether fortuitous or designed, may have been brought about. Organic

nature abounds with unmistakable and irresistible indications of design, and, being a connected and consistent system, this evidence carries the implication of design throughout the whole. On the other hand, chance carries no probabilities with it, can never be developed into a consistent system, but, when applied to the explanation of orderly or beneficial results, heaps up improbabilities at every step beyond all computation. To us, a fortuitous Cosmos is simply inconceivable. The alternative is a designed Cosmos."* That the argument of design is not weakened by the Darwinian doctrine is thus illustrated by the same able naturalist: "All the facts about the eye, which convinced him [the sceptic] that the organ was designed, remain just as they were. His conviction was not produced through testimony or eye-witness, but design was irresistibly inferred from the evidence of design in the eye itself. Now if the eye as it is, or has become, so convincingly argued design, why not each particular step or part of this result? If the production of a perfect crystalline lens in the eye—you know not how—as much indicated design as did the production of a Dollond achromatic lens—you understand how—then why does not 'the swelling out' of a particular portion of the membrane behind the iris—caused you know not how—which, by 'correcting the errors of disper-

* Darwiniana, p. 153.

sion and making the image somewhat more colorless,' enabled the young 'animals to see more distinctly than their parents or brethren,' equally indicate design—if not as much as a perfect crystalline, or a Dollond compound lens, yet as much as a common spectacle-glass? Darwin only assures you that what you may have thought was done directly and at once was done indirectly and successively. But you freely admit that indirection and succession do not invalidate design, and also that Paley and all the natural theologians drew the arguments which convinced your sceptic wholly from eyes indirectly or naturally produced. Recall a woman of a past generation and show her a web of cloth; ask her how it was made, and she will say that the wool or cotton was carded, spun, and woven by hand. When you tell her it was not made by manual labor, that probably no hand has touched the materials throughout the process, it is possible that she might at first regard your statement as tantamount to the assertion that the cloth was made without design. If she did, she would not credit your statement. If you patiently explained to her the theory of carding-machines, spinning-jennies, and power-looms, would her reception of your explanation weaken her conviction that the cloth was the result of design? It is certain that she would believe in design as firmly as before, and that this belief would be attended by a

higher conception and reverent admiration of a wisdom, skill, and power greatly beyond anything she had previously conceived possible."*

The three agencies which are mainly instrumental, according to the doctrine of evolution, in producing the animal kingdom as it now exists, are the law of heredity, or the tendency of a living being to produce offspring like itself, the law of variation, or a coexisting tendency to produce offspring with slight differences from the parent and from one another, and natural selection, which prevents over-population and effects the survival of the fittest. Other tendencies in nature are auxiliary to these, such as the desire of food, and the disposition to struggle for it against rivals. It is through the co-working of these instrumentalities that the system of nature is educed. But neither of them, nor all of them together, avail to account for the *order* of nature that results, and this for the reason that they are blind, unintelligent forces. Let the intermediate process be what it may, let the paths to the goal be never so devious, the goal is reached, and the outcome is of such a nature as to make it evident that it was aimed at from the start. "Natural selection is not an agent, but a result; and it is, moreover, only a negative or privative result." The favored party in the struggle "does not owe his existence, but only his *sole* existence

* Ibid. pp. 84, 85.

to it, as distinguished from the fate of a rival who perishes." "Natural selection only weeds, and does not plant; it is the drain of Nature, carrying off the irregularities, the monstrosities, the abortions; it comes in after and upon the active developments of Nature to prune and thin them; but it does not create a species; it does not possess one productive or generative function." Canon Mozley, from whom these extracts are taken, proceeds to show how untenable is the idea of a variability left utterly to chance: "If natural selection, then, has nothing to do with the production of favorable variations, but only adopts them when they arise; in the absence of any law to dictate or direct in any way the course of such variations, nothing of which kind is as yet supplied to us; whence does Mr. Darwin get that succession of favorable variations which is necessary for the ultimate formation of a regular and highly organized species? How shall this long succession of slight advances in the same line, which are requisite to develop an organ or limit, be obtained?" More than this, a continuous development in several organs, and several limbs, all expanding in harmony, and growing into a composite and complete animal whole, has to be accounted for. "We do not see how chance, however long a time it had to work in, could possibly account for this succession of steps in Nature, all fitting in with preceding

steps; this train of developments of, and additions to, a rudimental organic stock, all respectively joining on to the last one, and at length collectively forming a harmonious whole. Undoubtedly chance variation will give you in an infinity of time certain given variations, but in what character do these variations come?" "They come, but they do not stay: they are off again, and others come in their place;—for we must keep faithfully to the hypothesis of a real infinite chance variation as a law of nature. If amid this crowd of changing forms of life, in this ocean of fluctuation and metamorphosis, some structural points stand permanently out as insulations in the scene; if these have a correspondence with each other, and form an harmonious animal fabric; if these arrivals, we say, which are fixed, also cohere and agree;—this is not included within the hypothesis, and must be accounted for in some other way. The chances then that you get by the mere infinity of variation do not construct a species. You only regard your infinite variability on one side, viz., as furnishing your required chance; you do not regard it, on the other, as taking it away when it has given it; you do not see that what is gained by chance is also lost by chance." "A negotiation and compact with this wild power"—chance—"is impossible. Is not the advocate of natural selection deceived by the enormous intervals of time which he interposes

between the successive steps of the progress, so that he forgets every time the succeeding step comes, that it is a coincidence with a preceding one? These successive coinciding developments equally require to be accounted for, whether the intervals between them are minutes or ages. Suppose I throw in regular series from one to fifty, the chances against those fifty throws in succession are the same, whether there is a second of time between each two or a million of years. But the advocate of natural selection seems to think that, because he throws with ages between instead of seconds, the coincidence in his successive throws has not to be accounted for." The Epicurean theory appealed to the infinite duration of the world as the ground of the possibility of ascribing it to chance. "Such a position is of course absurd, because no time can really exhaust chance. Chance is as infinite as time. Chance, therefore, could never bring the Epicurean his basis of universal order in any extent of time. Nor could a simple, undirected variability without scope or aim, ever produce the existing world of species; it could never exhaust its stock of incongruities and imperfections."*

It is obvious that variability is under restraint. In agreement with the tenor of the foregoing remarks by an eminent metaphysician, are the statements

* Mozley's Essays, Vol. II., pp. 387, 396, 399, 402, 406.

which follow from an equally eminent naturalist, who favors the Darwinian view. He points out two sources of confusion in the discussion. "One is the notion of the direct and independent creation of species, with only an ideal connection between them, to question which was thought to question the principle of design. The other is a wrong idea of the nature and province of natural selection." "Natural selection is not the wind that propels the vessel, but the rudder, which, by friction, now on this side and now on that, shapes the course. The rudder acts while the vessel is in motion, effects nothing while it is at rest. Variation answers to the wind: 'Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth.' Its course is controlled by natural selection, the action of which, at any given moment, is seemingly small or insensible; but the ultimate results are great. This proceeds mainly through outward influences. But we are more and more convinced that variation, and, therefore, the ground of adaptation, is not a product of, but a response to, the action of the environment. Variations, in other words, the differences between individual plants and animals, are evidently not from without, but from within—not physical, but physiological." In the case of plants, "the occult power, whatever it be, does not seem in any given case to act vaguely, producing all sorts of varia-

tions from a common centre, to be reduced by the struggle for life to fewness and the appearance of order; these are, rather, orderly indications from the first."* "So long as gradatory, orderly, and adapted forms in nature argue design, and at least while the physical cause of variation is utterly unknown and mysterious, we should advise Mr. Darwin to assume, in the philosophy of his hypothesis, *that variation has been led along certain beneficial lines.*"† "I argue that, judging from the past, it is not improbable that variation itself may be hereafter shown to result from physical causes. . . . . But the whole course of scientific discovery goes to assure us that the discovery of the cause of variation will be only a resolution of variation into two factors—one, the immediate, secondary cause of the change which so far explains them; the other, an unresolved or unexplained phenomenon, which will then stand just where the product, variation, now stands, only that it will be one step nearer to the efficient cause."‡ Reasoning and the facts of science concur in leading us to the conclusion that variability is not a wild, unregulated tendency, but is under guidance, and is the agent of design.

It has sometimes been objected to the argument of design that we cannot reason from the works of man

* Darwiniana, pp. 386, 387. † Ibid., p. 148. ‡ P. 76.

to the products of Nature. The former are made, the latter grow. That is, the mode of their origination is different. It is said that if we found a watch, even if we had never seen one before, we should recognize it as the result of human workmanship, from the previous observation of the sort of things that are made by man. Neither of these objections is valid. Neither is relevant. That in the watch which convinces us immediately that it was designed, is the mechanism, and the adaptedness of it to mark time. What if, on other grounds also, we might infer that it was made? This does not affect the validity of the conclusion as inferred from the marks of design observed in it, from its fitness to subserve an end. When we observe the mechanism of the human body, with its various organs in their relation to one another, we infer, with a like certainty, that it was designed, although we have never seen the Author, and although we are obliged to attribute to Him superhuman power.

The most frequent objection of late to the argument of design may be put in the form of the proposition that things were not made for their use, but are used because they are made. Their use simply ensues upon their existence. This objection merely ignores the point of the argument which it opposes, as is shown by Canon Mozley in the following passage:

"We never saw any argumentative formulas of Encyclopædists against design in Nature, which did not substantially amount to this, viz., to saying, Shut your eyes to design, and you will not see it. The philosophy involved in this dictum is exactly the same as that which we have in theirs, and it has the advantage of being more plainly expressed. Take their cardinal formula—'Conditions of Existence'* —that the structure of the body is not intended *for* life, but that life follows *from* it, and would not exist *without* it, *i.e.*, that the bodily structure is the condition of existence, and no more. The ingenuity and plausibility, then, of this formula is wholly obtained by an omission, and by the audacity with which that omission is made; by the circumstance that it fastens the mind upon *sequence*, and thrusts aside and ignores the natural, the unavoidable aspect of *provision*. In every system or compages of forces which issues in some particular result, any one of the forces of which the whole is composed, is the *condition* of the production of that result. In chemical combination each separate item is the condition of the whole. One pipe or one artery within the body, one

* "Les causes finales ne sont, en dépit de leur nom, que les effets évidens, ou les *conditions memes de l'existence* de chaque objet."—*Revue Encyclopedique*, vol. v., p. 231. "Cuvier seems to have adopted the term in a sense *not* opposed to final causes."—Owen's *Comparative Anatomy*, vol. iii., p. 787.

single ingredient in the air outside of it, is the condition of existence. But it is evident that an apparatus, as one harmonious whole, stands in a different relation toward the result which it produces, from that of one or other single item of it; and that the relation of *sine qua non*, though included in, is not the complete and adequate expression of that aspect of the machinery as a whole. That whole is naturally regarded by the mind not only in this light, viz., that something follows from it, but also in another light, viz., that it is constructed *for* something. We see a concurrent action towards, as well as a sequence from; we see more than conditions of existence,—we see a provision for existence. The end does not simply come after the means, but the means intend the end. But the formula—'Conditions of Existence'—will not recognize a consequence; only see the retrospective view, not the prospective. It only sees in sentient life the upshot of the bodily combinations, and discards the aspect of it as the end and scope of them. The formula, therefore, attains its purpose by omission. Look only at a sequence, and you will only see a sequence. Geoffrey St. Hilaire, who carried the art of shutting the eyes to a high point of philosophical perfection, applied a scientific culture to this act of the mind. The point of view which he constructed for the purpose of exactly cutting off the approach of the proposition of common sense, reminds

one of some skilful piece of military engineering, which projects the angle of a bastion in the direction which cuts off the assault from one threatening quarter in the country around; and is a curious specimen of the dogged perversity of a man of genius when he does not like one direction in which things are going, and opposes to obtrusive evidence the science of *not* seeing. "Voir les fonctions d'abord, puis après les instrumens qui les produisent, c'est renverser l'orde des idées. Pour un naturaliste qui conclut d'apres les faits, chaque être est sorti des mains du Créateur, avec de propres conditions matérielles: il peut, selon qu'il lui est attribué de pouvoir: il emploie ses organes selon leur capacité d'action." * It is a misstatement, then, to say that the advocates of design look at functions first, and at

* *Principes de Philosophie Zoologique*, p. 66. His illustration against design is: "A raisonner de la sorte, vous diriez d'un homme qui fait usage de béquilles, qu'il était originairement destiné au malheur d'avoir l'une de ses jambes paralysée ou amputée." It is, however, a most gratuitous transposition of the final cause to fit the man to the crutch, instead of what is much more obvious,—the crutch to the man. We cannot but add, with reference to the defect of logical training which these great scientific investigators sometimes show, that it is singular that Cuvier and St. Hilaire should dispute over two hundred pages upon the identity of organs, *e. g.*, whether the fore-hoof of an ox is exactly the "same organ" with the wing of a bat, without it occurring to either of them to ask, whether they were using "identity" in the same sense or using it in different senses and different respects.

instruments for the functions afterwards; what they do is to look at both together, and argue from their concurrence. But this, looking at them both, and looking at them in concurrence, is what St. Hilaire prohibits; it is not our seeing one before the other, but seeing the two in relation, which constitutes our offence. He will not allow the instrument to be looked at as agreeing with the work, but only at the work as necessarily coming out of the instrument. That is his point of view. Looking at the case, then, in this accurately limited point of view, design is undoubtedly excluded. Granted the construction of the instrument, the employment of it, or the function, does not flow from the construction by design, but by necessity. The instrument works, and works according to its make, and according to its component parts. How can it work otherwise? The function is the only action of which the instrument is capable, and therefore is an unavoidable derivation for the instrument. But though, this point of view granted, design is excluded, what right has St. Hilaire to impose this point of view? On what ground does he assert that the instrument works according to its construction, and that *that is all?* We say there is something besides the instrument working according to its construction, viz., that the instrument is constructed for its work; we assert this on the ground of the plain agreement and coincidence

of the two. St. Hilaire says you have no right to see coincidence and correspondence; you have only the right to see the work proceeding from the instrument; you have no right to see the adaptation of the instrument for the work; you are at liberty to perceive the motion derived from the oars and sails; you are forbidden to discern the aptitudes of the oars and sails to produce the motion of the boat. But if there are two relations to be seen, why should we only see one of them?"

All criticism of the methods of Nature, all accusations of a want of simplicity, or a want of benevolence, in its arrangements, have no force as arguments against the *existence* of an intelligent Creator. Whatever weight may be supposed to belong to such objections, pertains to them as bearing on the conception that is to be formed of the attributes of God. From this point of view, they are generally specimens of reasoning upon a vast system, of which material things form only a part, and which is imperfectly comprehended.

The force of the argument of design depends on the assumption that man has a soul, that he is a spirit, personal and free. Materialists deny this. By others, it is left doubtful. Professor Huxley, in his Essay on Protoplasm, says: "What do we know of that 'spirit' over whose threatened extinction so great a lamentation is arising . . . . except that"—like matter—" it is also the name for an unknown and hypothetical

cause, or condition of states of consciousness?" "Matter and spirit are but names for the imaginary substrata of the groups of natural phenomena." That is to say, self, the *ego*, is a "hypothetical," "imaginary" substratum of mental states. Here our knowledge of matter and mind are put on a level. But of ourselves we have undeniably a direct, immediate intuition. It is far less unreasonable for one to be a Berkeleian, or even an idealist, than to question the reality of himself as a substance, or personal subject. But, following Hume, Professor Huxley calls in question the fact of the intuition of self. Kant reached the same conclusion on other grounds. But the *cogito, ergo sum* of Des Cartes stands firm; not as a logical inference, but as giving the condition of the intuitive idea, which is the unassailable guaranty of the reality of the object —the *ego*. As the personal subject is grammatically involved in the *cogito*, so in the act of thought is the reality of the thinker implied. If he knows that he thinks, he knows that he exists. The existence of the *ego* is as evident in consciousness as is the existence of the thought. The thought is, and is known to be, the act or state of the ego. The idea of mental "phenomena" without mind, is as absurd as the idea of luminosity without a thing that is luminous. I know myself, as an entity, maintaining persistently its identity; and I know myself as distinct from my

organism, from my heart, and lungs, and liver, and brain, and the whole material system with which I am connected.* It is granted that the "phenomena" are known to be *toto genere* distinct from those of the body and of matter; desire, memory, love, hate, are absolutely dissimilar to nerves and blood-vessels. The substance of which these thoughts and feelings are the manifestation is equally distinct. Dr. Tyndall has well said: "Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously, we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor, apparently, any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from one phenomenon to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why." "The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable." "*The problem of the connection of the body and soul is as insoluble, as it was in the pre-scientific ages.*"† To say that the soul is the body, or a portion of the body, or a mere function of the body, is, therefore, not only to make an assertion of which science can offer no proof; but it is to make an assertion which consciousness repudiates as inconsistent with the intuition of self.

* Compare Mozley, Vol. II., p. 368.

† From the Address on the Methods and Tendencies of Physical Investigation.

This recognition of our own personality is essential to the due validity and impressiveness of the argument of design, in two ways. It is the consciousness of myself as a free intelligence, adapting means to ends, that raises in me the image of a higher Intelligence to whom I am like. Without this idea and norm within me, I should neither have any conception of God as a Creator, nor any proof of His existence. Secondly, in man there is presented a worthy end, towards which physical arrangements point; and thus completeness is given to the argument of design. This last point is forcibly presented by the author from whom I have already cited. Nothing but "the spiritual principle can give that strong, pointed and masterly *end* of the physical apparatus, which our reason wants in order to crown that apparatus with design." "It is only when we come to man that an end in immediate connection with an animal machinery shines forth with such overpowering intrinsic evidence, and stands out in so conspicuous and irresistible a light, that the completing stroke and finish is given to the evidence of design. In man the end is so distinctly superior to the machine, the end is so clearly beyond the machine, that the argument strikes home." "Can any thing exceed the conviction with which any man, when he really thinks of himself, and thinks of his body, must say, This body exists for the sake of *me:* I am its end, all this machinery is no-

thing without myself as an explanation? A man cannot rid himself of this sense of the object of his own body, that it is for the sake of *him*—that personal self of which he is conscious: the purpose clings to the machine, and cannot be parted from it. And, therefore, inasmuch as *he* is a different thing from the machine, he sees distinctly that this machine exists for an end beyond itself, which is the coping-stone of the argument of design." "Does not the great argument of Paley derive its real pungency from the reader having always, consciously or unconsciously, *man* in his mind in connection with the machinery of Nature? In the description of the eye, he thinks of man, of himself, who sees." *

The atheism that rests in second causes, that traces the world back to a collection of atoms, and there halts, could not be more pointedly condemned than in the words of the founder of the inductive philosophy, who knew how to use without abusing the truth of final causes. "It is true," says Lord Bacon, "that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion. For while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them, confederate and linked together, it must

* Mozley's Essays, Vol. II., p. 366 seq.

needs fly to Providence and Deity. Nay, that school which is most accused of atheism doth most demonstrate religion; that is, the school of Leucippus and Democritus and Epicurus. For it is a thousand times more credible that four mutable elements, and one immutable fifth essence, duly and eternally placed, need no God, *than that an army of infinite small portions or seeds, unplaced, should have produced this order and beauty without a divine marshal.*"*

* Essays: xvi., of Atheism.

IV.

THE REASONABLENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

Prayer, in its fundamental idea, is petition. It is so described in the teaching of Christ (Matt. vii. 7 seq., Luke xi. 5 seq., xviii. 1 seq.). A child goes to a father with a request for something. It is a perfectly natural and reasonable act where there is dependence and want on one side, and strength and the spirit of helpfulness on the other. Nothing is more common than for men to answer the prayers addressed to them. Sometimes they will do this where there is no stronger motive than a desire to get rid of the suppliant. To represent God as moved by prayer to grant what He is asked to give, does not imply that He is mutable in character, but it implies the opposite. *For the prayer is a new fact.* The sincere, filial uplooking to Him, which is the root and essence of supplication, finds a fit response in the bestowal of the good that is sought. If God were to deal, in all respects, with the prayerful, as He

deals with the prayerless, it would be treating the humble and the self-sufficient, the good and the evil, in all respects alike. This would not be unchangeable goodness and justice, but would indicate the absence of these qualities.

Petition is always to be broadly distinguished from demand or dictation. It may be granted or not, at the option of the person addressed. In a family, there are some requests which are certain to be complied with. "What man is there of you if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" If a child asks for moral direction, for light respecting matters of great concern to him, or if he appeals for support in temptation or sorrow, no one with the heart of a father would ever withhold the good sought. So in the Bible, the promise of the Spirit of God is made, without qualification, to every one who petitions for this best gift for himself (Luke xi. 13). As to a great variety of things which children may ask of a parent, while the simple fact of an innocent request produces an inclination to comply with it, and thus *tends* to procure the good sought, it is yet, of course, left to the discretion of the parent to give or to withhold it. So of petitions to the Heavenly Father. It may be for the real interest, if not for the immediate gratification, of the petitioner to have them denied. It rests with the perfect wisdom and love of God to determine: "Nevertheless, not my

will, but thine be done." No one can say with certainty that it would be better for him to be rich than to be poor, to escape from bereavement rather than to suffer it, to have honor than to have reproach, to live on to old age than to die young, etc. These are questions of probability, where human judgment may be quite astray, and human preference may be unwise. It requires omniscience to decide them infallibly. This is true of a thousand things which may be suitable objects of prayer.

There is a limit, however, to the proper objects of petition. A father has a given system, certain known principles, for the management of his household. It would be wrong, as well as futile, to ask him to do something which clashes with the wise and well-understood method under which the affairs of the family are conducted. A child who, perhaps, might properly ask his father to change the hour of dinner, either permanently, or on a particular day, might be guilty of disrespect if he were to request that all the meals of the family should take place in the night-time. To ask for a new article of furniture is one thing; to ask that the house may be burned down is another. When the head of a household has acquainted his family with the arrangements, from which he chooses not to deviate, an enclosure is made within which, in all ordinary circumstances, petitions are out of place.

Applying the analogy to God in His relation to men, we find certain fixed arrangements in the constitution of man and of the world, and we meet, in the course of events, with certain plain and decisive indications of what the will of God is for the future. No reverent or reasonable man would pray that the sun might rise at midnight, that an apple-tree might bear fruit out of doors in mid-winter, that a young child might have at once the mental power and knowledge of a man, or that certain invalids, in the last stages of mortal disease, might recover. There is virtually a declared purpose of God to the contrary, as evident as if it were expressed in words, upon the matter of these petitions. They manifestly call for such a revolution in God's mode of governing the world as we have no right to look for, under the ordinary circumstances of human life.

But it does not follow, because there is an appointed order of things, that there is no space left for the hearing and answering of prayer. There are channels open between God and the human soul. God is a Person, and He does not withdraw Himself from converse with His children. The divine Spirit can impart light, guidance, courage, strength to resist temptation, comfort in despondency, to the spirit of man. And outward changes, within the sphere of material nature, are largely dependent on human perceptions, feelings,

and volitions. Indirectly, thus, changes in the material sphere may be effected by a divine influence on the mind of man. The physician, the nurse, the sea-captain, the general, every human being who has the lives and temporal interests of his fellow-men under his charge, may be guided, enlightened, practically controlled, by a divine influence exerted upon the mind in response to supplication. Although there are laws of mind as well as of matter, the reasonableness of prayer for changes of the character just stated is comparatively seldom questioned. It is in respect to prayer for purely physical changes, where material forces are exclusively concerned, that the difficulty is chiefly felt. It is sometimes said that to grant such prayers would argue an inconsistency, or fickleness in God, who has already established the course of Nature. It is, also, urged that the course of Nature being fixed and uniform, no means are open for rendering answers to supplications of this sort.

Before taking up this topic, it is well to notice a preliminary objection which is sometimes raised on this subject. It is said that an exact boundary cannot be fixed between the provinces of Nature, where prayer, by common consent, is shut out—as the astronomic system—and the sphere within which prayer is considered to have an influence. But here the analogy of the family comes in, where the line of demarcation

beyond which petitions to the parent are precluded by unalterable arrangements may not always be correctly defined by the children. The possibility of mistake in this regard does not do away with the admitted fact that there is a real distinction of the kind, and one which is practically acted on. The circumstance that there may be extravagant petitions does not prove that there are none which are reasonable. Our belief in the supernatural, and the expectations dictated by it, are modified by education. They are not extirpated, but pruned and directed; in this respect resembling the other faculties and tendencies of our nature. It is so with regard to the belief in miracles. Once they may have been expected on many occasions where now they are not looked for. On this ground it would be a rash and false conclusion that they are impossible, or that, under given circumstances—as parts and proofs of a Revelation—they are unlikely to occur.

The question whether prayer for physical changes is answered is to be considered from the stand-point of theism. On the pantheistic or atheistic assumption, or on the plane of materialism, there is no room for such a discussion. If there is no God to answer prayer, of course prayer will not be answered. An Epicurean deity who stands aloof from the world, and is indifferent to the wants of men, is equivalent, as regards the present inquiry, to no God at all. We

assume, on evidence which need not be recapitulated here, that God is a Person, who is capable of entering into communion with men, and of hearing their petitions, and that He is merciful. But there are laws of Nature, and the question is whether they constitute, for any reason, a barrier in the way of His responding to these petitions. It is altogether a mistake, we may add, to suppose that the existence of natural laws and a natural order is a modern discovery. The idea of "the tree yielding fruit after his kind *whose seed is in itself*" is in the beginning of Genesis; the uniform movement of the tides and of the heavenly bodies, and the regular processes of animal life, are the subject of sublime passages in Job; the constant procession of Nature in seed-time and harvest, in day and night, is recognized throughout the Scriptures. The ascription of natural phenomena to God's agency, and belief in supernatural interpositions, did not exclude a belief, likewise, in natural laws. In fact, this belief was implied in the idea of a miracle. But, to return to the point, what to a theist is natural law? Law is not a being; it is an abstraction. It is a term for expressing the uniformity of the sequences of Nature. Law is another name for invariable succession. Fire, brought into contact with a certain class of material things, burns; not once, or twice, but always. The conditions being the

same, the same effect follows. This, we say, is a law. But theism holds not only that law is no agent, but that agency, so far as it belongs to objects in Nature, is dependent upon, and either immediately or ultimately derived from, the Creator and Preserver of Nature. Law signifies His plan of acting, or the plan which the living God ordains for the action of the forces of matter. That there is an order of Nature, the theist fully recognizes. Indeed, from this order—as far as the evidence from Nature is concerned—he derives his proof that God is an intelligent being. The wisdom of instituting such an order, on which all our anticipations of the future rest, is too obvious to be denied by anybody. The theist holds, however, that Nature has not its end in itself, is not for its own sake. The whole end of the visible creation it is beyond our power to ascertain; but one end is the well-being of man. To man the lower orders of being point. No sanctity belongs to the laws of external Nature, as such. They are a method adapted for an end beyond themselves. They are a part of a more extensive order, which embraces moral and spiritual being, and can only be imperfectly comprehended. If any of the foregoing propositions are disputed, the controversy lies back of the question now before us. It pertains to the grounds of theism.

Now to assert that God *cannot* answer prayer for

physical changes—cannot, if He will—is to assert what it is impossible to prove. He who remembers our very limited knowledge of Nature,—how much we have to learn, notwithstanding the remarkable progress of natural science in recent days; who is sensible, too, that we are in the dark as to the *modus operandi* of God in His relation to Nature, will be slow to limit thus the resources of omnipotence.

But there are ways in which we can conceive that prayers for physical changes may be answered. I dismiss, at the outset, the idea that the benefit of prayer is purely reflex, as if it were a spiritual gymnastic having its whole effect on the mind of the suppliant. No one can offer a real prayer on such a theory; for the subjective benefit from it, whatever that may be, is conditioned on the belief in its objective efficacy. Schleiermacher's idea that prayer answers itself by operating, as a cause among causes, producing its own fulfilment, and a similar suggestion of Chalmers—which, however, is not given as his own opinion—that there may be conceivably a subtle tie of connection between the prayer and its answer, in the domain of second causes, are liable to the same objection. Under such a view, prayer ceases to be a *bona fide* petition. Moreover, no room, apparently, is left for the exercise of discretion as to granting or denying it.

There are two ways, at least, in which it may be

conceived that prayers for physical changes are complied with.

The first assumes a pre-arranged harmony between the prayer and the answer provided for it. Both had their place—the one as a free act of man, the other as a physical change ordained to correspond to it—in the plan of the world. The train of causes is set at the beginning, in the foreknowledge of the petition to be offered, for the evolving of an appropriate response. No interposition is required. The reign of law is undisturbed.* It is felt by many to be an objection to this view that if nothing is to occur except what causes already in operation virtually contain, it seems like praying about what is past and beyond recall.

The second view is that, in answering prayer, God may interpose, not *manifestly* as in the case of a miracle, but, by the control which He exercises over the laws of Nature, may modify the effect of their action. That such *power* belongs to God no one who believes in Him will think of questioning. A like power, in a less degree, belongs to men. It is exerted every time one raises his arm by an act of will. It is exerted whenever a man pumps water out of a well. The initial force is in his volition; the effect is a phenomenon that would not have occurred, independently of that new, and—as regards material nature—supernatu-

* See McCosh's *Method of the Divine Government*, p. 222.

ral antecedent. Yet it is through the instrumentality of Nature and of its laws that the human will produces these new effects. All that is included under the term Art, all the works and contrivances of mankind, spring from such interpositions of the human will, which produce through the medium of natural forces new products. The botanist and the cattle-breeder exert an almost creative power, not by counteracting the laws of nature, but by using and directing them. If, it has been well said, Professor Espy can cause a shower of rain, God can. If nature is thus plastic in the hands of the creature, how much more in the hands of the Creator! What we call the course of Nature is the will of God acting systematically, either as the sole efficient, or through the intermediary agency of second causes. On either hypothesis it is easy to suppose a new influx of energy from the primal source of power, or a new combination in the occult laboratory of Nature, which shall modify, in a corresponding degree, visible phenomena.

Such an act of God need produce no variation in the sequences of phenomena so far as they are cognizable by man. The modification of causes may take place back of all proximate forces, in a region which science cannot penetrate; for science does not pretend to follow phenomena back to their ultimate antecedents. There is a curtain which is soon reached,

through which human observation cannot pierce. The intervention of Deity is out of sight, among the remoter forces that are nearer the primitive fountain of power in Himself. Chalmers illustrates this view by showing how a prayer for a prosperous voyage may be answered without any violation of established sequences so far as they fall under human observation. God causes a wind to arise; but this was by the condensation of vapor, according to the natural law. The vapor was raised by the action of heat, the natural process. Carry these explanations to the uttermost limits to which science can push its observations, all might move in strictly undeviating order. But ulterior to this there is a "deep and dark abyss between the furthest reach of man's discovery, and the forthgoings of God's will," where the finger of the Almighty touches the mechanism of the world.*

It is worth while to stop and inquire, what precisely is meant by the uniformity of Nature? It is not meant that the phenomena which we now witness have always existed, or will always exist in the future. It is not supposed that the sun has *always* risen and set, as is the fact at present; and it would be impossible to prove, if any one believes, that the sun will continue to rise and set to all eternity in the future. What is the history of Nature but a record of perpetual

* Natural Theology, Vol. II., p. 339.

changes—new beings, new phenomena, and new collocations of phenomena, presenting themselves on the scene. To this extent, our expectation that the future will be like the past is subject to qualification.

No doubt, we believe that the same assemblage of antecedents will be followed by the same consequent. That is to say, there are laws of Nature. On this assumption, inductive reasoning is founded. It would be a flagrant violation of logic, however, to infer that miracles have never occurred. A miracle, as Mr. Mill has remarked, supposes the introduction of a new antecedent, the volition of God; and the presence or absence of the antecedent is shown by the effect produced. If this effect surpass that which the physical antecedents have been shown by experience to be capable of producing, the new antecedent must be presupposed. Now Nature is not uniform in the sense that miracles have not occurred, or in the sense that they may not, if God so will, occur hereafter. An epileptic son, who had been afflicted with this terrible disorder from childhood, was brought by his father to Jesus, and was immediately cured by Him (Mark ix. 17–28). This is a perfectly well-attested historical fact. Disbelieve it (and other like facts in connection with it), and you cannot account for the existence of the Christian Church, a fact not less substantial and stupendous than the solar system. Generally speak-

ing, answers to prayer, on the view presented above, lack one element of a miracle; the supernatural interposition is not manifest, palpable to the senses. But the cause is the same, and the effect, viz., a modification of the course of Nature, is the same. Can a theist suppose that such interpositions are not possible? To say that God is put in fetters by natural law, which is only His own habitual procedure, is to make Him a slave to habit. If He "makes the rain to fall," He can send it or withhold it, as He deems best. Nature is flexible in His hand. The distinction of the natural and the supernatural is made for certain purposes; but the natural *is* supernatural.

It is said that, as a matter of fact, prayers for physical changes are not answered. Whether they could be or not, it is said that, in point of fact, they are not. But this assertion stands without proof.

It has been proposed to test the efficacy of prayer for the recovery of the sick by experiments in a hospital. This is the so-called "prayer-gauge." This would be to test the benevolence of a Ruler or Benefactor—or one thought to be such—by bringing to him petitions to see whether he would grant them or not. This experiment would be apt to fail of its end if it were tried even upon a man reported to be good and kind. The proper quality of prayer, that it shall be heart-felt

petition, offered in faith, and having no ulterior motive beyond a desire of the good sought, is wanting. The experiment is vitiated from the start by a disregard of the conditions essential to the idea of true prayer. Another difficulty with the hospital-test is that such an experiment, independently of the objection just named, would be an utterly insufficient basis for an induction relative to the utility of prayer. Prayer does not operate like a natural force. If fire burns once, on the principle of the uniformity of Nature we infer that it will burn again, and as often as the experiment is repeated. But petitions do not act with this invariable efficiency. There may be reasons why they should be granted here, and denied there. The materials for induction are complex, and scattered over a vast area. Besides, they are not of a nature to be tested in the crucible, or weighed in the balance. Who can judge of the character of a particular suppliant, and estimate the degree of likelihood that he will be heard? It must be confessed that the crude attempt to apply an experimental test to devotion has its parallel in the practice of those who undertake to demonstrate the efficacy of prayer by special instances, where none of the criteria of logical induction—such as discrimination between effects and coincidences, or the impartial gathering of facts in a sufficient number—are present. A man may be convinced for himself, and

on sufficient grounds, of "the unbounded might"* of prayer, when the means of logically establishing the fact to the satisfaction of another are not at hand.

To avoid the objections to the "hospital-test," it has been proposed to appeal to statistics, and to inquire whether facts gathered from observation warrant the conclusion that supplications for long life have had an effect. But here the circumstances are so complicated as to baffle calculation. If prayer for long life tends to produce longevity, it is only one out of various causes which may go to determine the result. Prayers are offered by religious men for others not less than for themselves. Good men do not always pray for long life. The elements of a statistical estimate, then, are wanting. The phenomena are not observable to such an extent and in such form as to furnish a basis for an inductive conclusion. Science does not contradict faith; but it is impracticable to resolve faith into science.†

If it is possible for God to answer prayers, even for physical changes, and if there is no proof that He does not, what reason is there for believing that He will? The first is that prayer has the same foundation in human nature that religion has, of which it forms an es-

* From Wordsworth's Excursion, b. i.

† This is clearly set forth by an ingenious writer, Mr. G. J. Romanes, *Christian Prayer and General Laws*, etc., p. 259.

sential part. There is a well-nigh irrepressible instinct which impels men to call upon the Author and Ruler of the world, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, for help, and for deliverance in trouble. They believe that He can meet their need, even if they cannot tell how; and sooner than give up this faith, they will suspect, if they cannot detect, fallacies in fine-spun arguments to prove the contrary. The second reason is the authority of Revelation. Prayer is there encouraged by injunction and example. The lordship of God over material Nature is declared in tones that carry conviction to the soul, and is demonstrated by miracle. Christ Himself prayed.

V.

JESUS WAS NOT A RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIAST.

Those who disbelieve in the supernatural mission and authority of Christ can do so at present only by assuming that He was a religious Enthusiast. It is no longer pretended, as it was by some of those about Him, that He was a "deceiver" (Matt. xxvii. 63, John vii. 12.) He was either the self-deluded victim of his own imagination, or He was in truth the Son of God, sent by the Father, having "power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. ix. 6).

All who gave credence to the record of His miracles are thereby precluded from disbelieving in Him. This record cannot be set aside without our involving ourselves in a labyrinth of historical perplexities from which there are no means of escape. How shall we explain the existence of the record? How shall we divide the miracles from the teaching which is obviously authentic, and has them for its subject or occasion? What could have moved the disciples to accept Him as Messiah without the expected

and proper signs of Messianic office, especially when their national and political aspirations were utterly disappointed?

But apart from the miracles, the character and circumstances of Jesus are inconsistent with the idea that he was an Enthusiast, elated and bewildered by the dreams of fancy.

1. *Self-searching was inevitable in the situation in which He was placed.* The question who He was, and whether there was any ground for His claims, was constantly brought home to Him. Was it reasonable *to believe in Him*—the same question that is agitated now, was agitated by everybody near Him. There were different opinions. His own kinsmen at first did not believe in Him. His townsmen were sceptical as to His claims. Some people said that he was in a league with Satan, and got help from him. The influential classes were mostly incredulous and hostile; and their influence was great among the common people. Many were perplexed, and knew not what to think. The question respecting Himself was thus perpetually thrust upon His attention. But He showed no disposition to shun the inquiry, or to escape from self-scrutiny. We find Him, in the calmest manner possible, asking His disciples whom the people took Him to be. Having been told what the different suppositions were, He goes on to interrogate them as to

their own idea of Him: "Whom say ye that I am?" (Matt. xvi. 15). Then we find Him predicting that His adherents, even His chosen disciples, will be moved to desert Him. Nothing was wanting in His circumstances to call out misgivings in His own mind, had there been any ground for them.

2. *The sobriety of His conviction respecting Himself is made manifest in the ordeal through which He passed in His trial and crucifixion.* When He is forsaken by all, will not His confidence in Himself waver? Will He not see now that He is not what He thought Himself to be? Mark His demeanor! Carried from one priest to another, and from priest to governor, from Pilate to Herod, and back again to Pilate, He "answers not a word." Is this because there is a doubt of Himself? No: He breaks silence to avow to the High Priest that He is in truth the Son of God; and to explain to the Roman Procurator, that, though a King, His kingdom was not one that could possibly involve rebellion against the civil authority. The look which He cast upon Peter, a look of sad rebuke, implied an unshaken confidence in the truth of all His claims, at the very moment when they were the object of all sorts of contempt and ridicule, and were bringing upon Him a violent death at the hands of the authorities of His nation. The few words to the thief at His side on the cross, the prayer for the

fanatics who were destroying Him, His last words commending His departing spirit to the Father, involve the same undoubting consciousness of His exceptional character and office among men, which had attended Him at every moment of His career. It was a terrible test for pretensions that rested on fancy. In the fire of it, one would have supposed that they must shrivel away; that, if never before, He must have been exposed to Himself, and have seen through Himself.

3. *The holy character of Christ excludes the supposition of religious enthusiasm.* Self-exaggeration, even when it takes the form of enthusiasm, springs out of a root of moral evil. It has its ultimate origin in self-seeking. As Jesus Himself said: If the eye be single, the whole body will be full of light; a man will know himself. Hence enthusiasm, if balked in its aims, will often assume the form of conscious ambition, or turn into knavery. This is seen in popular leaders, like Mohammed, who begin as enthusiasts, but end worse than they began. The enormous self-delusion implied in the exalted pretensions of Jesus, in case they were not founded in truth, would have broken up the sobriety of His spirit, and deranged the harmony of His character. The safeguard against self-deception is thorough moral rectitude, by which all unhealthy and unreasonable self-exaltation is kept out. It is clear

that the absolute purity and humility of Jesus ensure the truthfulness of His estimate of Himself.

4. *His anticipations respecting the effect of His work, as the event has proved, were not enthusiastic.* What He said of the "much fruit" that would follow if the corn of wheat should fall into the ground, and die (John xii. 24), has been verified. He was in truth lifted up to draw all men unto Him. He was the founder of a unique and mighty kingdom, to which history affords no parallel, as He foresaw just at the moment when He stood alone, mocked, and scourged, and crowned with thorns, with a reed placed in His hand for a sceptre. None of the wise men of the world at that moment would have given the slightest credit to His prediction of the consequences of His work and of His death. They would have disregarded them as a ridiculous, hypocritical boast, or a madman's dream. But history has pronounced its verdict, and that verdict is that they corresponded to the coming reality. Was it intoxicated imagination, then, that governed him? or was it the calmest, the truest, the profoundest wisdom? Was that consciousness a nest of delusive fancies respecting Himself, or was it a clear, just perception of what He really was, and of the work which God had given Him to do?

VI.

THE MORAL AND SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS IN THE ATONEMENT.

The problem of the Atonement is to determine how the work of Christ influences God to forgive sin. How does it move Him to receive back into His fellowship and favor those who, notwithstanding their guilt for the past, and their remaining sin, betake themselves to Christ, cordially avail themselves of His intercession, and give themselves up to Him to be moulded in His image? The effect on the mind of God, especially on the retributive feeling in His nature, which stands in the way of the practical exercise of mercy, is the question of main difficulty.

Some of the ideas of President Edwards on this subject are of deep interest, and merit more attention than they have ever received.* My object is not to present his entire view, some parts of which are more open to criticism than others, but to set forth briefly certain leading points in his discussion.

* They are in his "Miscellaneous Remarks," etc., Dwight's ed., Vol. VII.

Where there is sin, something of the nature of compensation is required; either punishment, or a repentance, humiliation, and sorrow which are proportionate to the guilt incurred. This fitness of punishment (or of an equivalent repentance) is founded on the abhorrence and indignation which sin necessarily excites. Since punishment is a part of the fitness of things, is the correlate of ill-desert, the justice of God obliges Him to inflict it. Edwards explains the significance of punishment as consisting in the contradiction afforded by it to the implied language of sin, which is that God is not worthy to be respected and obeyed. Here there is some resemblance to suggestive remarks of Anselm respecting the proof of subjection to God, which the transgressor in suffering punishment involuntarily affords. Anselm speaks of God, and His will. Applying his idea to the law, we might say that the transgressor does not escape from its grasp by the revolt of his will against it. The law, cast off as a precept, lays hold of him with its punitive clutch. He flies from one side to the other, but the horizon ever surrounds him. No repentance answerable to the guilt of sin is possible to men. The reason of this, according to Edwards, is the infinite guilt of sin, as committed against an infinite being. Those who are not satisfied with this idea of the infinitude of guilt, might, perhaps, prefer to rest the impossibility of ade-

quate repentance on other grounds,—as the power of sinful habit partially to benumb conscience and paralyze the will.

Let the case be supposed of an enormous and long-continued wrong committed against me by another; "though at length he should leave it off, I should not forgive him, unless upon Gospel considerations."

But suppose an Intercessor comes forward, (1) a dearer friend to me, (2) always true and constant to me, (3) a near relation of the offender, and (4) undergoes hard labors and difficulties, pains and miseries to procure him forgiveness; and (5) the offender seeks favor in his name, flies to him, and is sensible how much the mediator has done and suffered, I should be satisfied and be inclined to receive him back to friendship.

The Intercessor may be called *the Patron*, the offender *the Client*, and the offended party *the Friend* of the patron. *Merit* is anything in one that recommends him to another's esteem, regard or affection.

It is reasonable to show respect or grant favors to one on account of his services to, or connection with, another. The stricter the union, the more does it prevail to the acceptance of the person, for the sake of him to whom he is united. There are many familiar illustrations of this law or principle of our nature. If the union be such that the two can be taken as com-

pletely one and the same, as to the interest of the client in relation to the patron, the patron may be taken as the substitute of the client, and the merits of the client may be imputed to him.

What degree of union is complete? When the patron is willing to take the client's destruction on himself, or what is equivalent to that, so that the client may escape: who is thus willing *for the reason that his love puts him into the place of the client.* Such love takes in the client's whole interest, is an equal balance for it, puts him thoroughly in the client's stead. Their interest becomes identical.

Especially is the client's welfare regarded for the patron's sake, when the patron expresses his desire for the client's welfare by being at the expense of his own personal and private welfare for the welfare of the client. The interest in the good expended is transferred into the good sought. The good of the price is parted with, for the good of the thing purchased: a proper substitution of one in the place of the other.

Especially, again, is the client's welfare regarded for the patron's sake, if the patron not only expresses his desires of the client's welfare, and that what is expended for him be given to him; but if, also, the merit of the patron *consists and appears* in what he does for the client's welfare—*if his merit has its existence for the sake of the client.*

It is still more rational to accept the patron's merit if he goes where the client is, clothes himself in his form, is made like him in all respects, etc.,—his own merit, it being carefully observed, remaining all the while inviolable.

The union of the patron and client must not infringe on two things,—the patron's union with the friend whose favor he seeks for the client, and the patron's own merit. For his recommending influence is in two things: (1) his merit, and (2) his union with the client.

The patron must appear united to his unworthy and offending client, under such circumstances as to demonstrate that he perfectly disapproves of the offence, and to show a perfect regard to virtue, and to the honor and dignity of his offended, injured friend.

This can be done in no way so thoroughly as by putting himself in the stead of the offender, under the violated law and rule of righteousness, and suffering the whole penalty due to the offender, and by himself, under such self-denial, honoring those violated rights and rules. Hereby he gives testimony to all beholders that, notwithstanding his love to his client, he would rather deny himself so greatly rather than see the welfare, authority, honor, and dignity of his friend, diminished or degraded.

If the dignity of the patron, taken in connection with his friend's regard for him, and his union to the client,

countervail the favor which the client needs, then there is a sufficiency in the patron to be the representative and substitute of the client.

If the patron and client are equals as to greatness of being or degree of existence, and the patron is so united with the client that he regards the interest of the client equally with his own personal interest, then his client's welfare becomes perfectly, and to all intents and purposes, his own interest, as much as his own personal welfare; and his friend will regard the client's welfare in an equal degree with the patron's welfare.

If the patron is greater than the client, then a less degree of union has the same effect on the friend.

Such a union may most fitly and aptly be represented by the client's being taken by the patron to be a part or member of himself, as though he were a member of his body.

When the suffering of the patron for the client is equal in value or weight to the client's suffering, considering the difference of the degree of persons, it shows that the love to the client is equal or equivalent to his love to himself, according to the different degree of the persons.

The client must actively and cordially concur in the affair. There must be towards the patron the feelings and acts appropriate to this relation; he must cleave to him, commit his cause to him, trust in him, approv-

ing of his friendship, kind undertaking and patronage; also, he must feel an approbation of the patron's union to his friend, whose favor he seeks; also, an approbation of the benefits which the patron seeks of his friend for the client.

The mediator must unite Himself to God and man; or, as it were, assume them both to Himself. But if He unites Himself to guilty men, of necessity, He brings their guilt—*i. e.* exposedness to penal evil—on Himself; He must take the rebel's sufferings on Himself, "*because otherwise His undertaking for, and uniting himself to such an one, will appear like countenancing his offence and rebellion.*" If He takes it upon Himself to bear the penalty, He quite takes off this appearance.

Christ suffered the wrath of God for men's sins in such a way as a perfectly holy person would who knew that God was not angry with him personally, but loved him. Christ bore the wrath of God in two ways: 1. He had *a clear sight* of the wrath of God against the sins of men, and the punishment they deserved. 2. He endured *the effects* of that wrath.

Without the sight of the odiousness of sin and the dreadfulness of punishment, He could not know how great a benefit He procured for them in redeeming them from this punishment. He had this sight, because sin fully revealed its odiousness in murdering the

Son of God, and everything in the circumstances of His last suffering was adapted to heighten this impression. This view of sin was, to Christ, a most painful sensation; it was immense suffering, not being balanced or neutralized by other feelings of an opposite nature; since God forsook Him, *i. e.*, took away these feelings. So Christ bare our sins, and, also, suffered wrath, or had a sense of the dreadfulness of the punishment of sin. "A very strong and lively love and pity towards the miserable, tends to make their case ours; as in other respects, so in this in particular, as it doth in our idea place us in their stead, under their misery, with a most lively sense of the feeling of that misery; *as it were, feeling it for them, actually suffering in their stead by strong sympathy.*"

Christ was sanctified in His last suffering; first, as He had a great sense of the odiousness of sin, and, secondly, as He had that experience of the bitter fruit and consequence of it. Moreover, He was then in the exercise of the highest act of obedience or holiness, which tended to increase the principle. This suffering "added to the finite holiness of the human nature of Christ." It was like fire which increased the preciousness of the gold, though it burned away no dross.

Christ endured *the effects* of the wrath of God. Satan and wicked men were left free—"let loose"—to inflict upon Him pain. God forsook Him; *i. e.*, withheld

pleasant ideas and manifestations of His love. Christ thus tasted in His inward experience the terror and dismay of souls forsaken of God, though Himself consciously free from guilt.

I remark upon these statements of Edwards:

1. Christ is first presented in them in the character of an Intercessor. Nor is this conception entirely dropped out of mind in the process of the discussion. As a prerequisite to this office, He must enter fully into the mind of the offended party, as well as the distress of the party offending. This absolute sympathy, or identification of Himself in feeling, with both parties, is necessary to qualify Him to intercede. Without it, His intercessions would not be intelligent on His own part, or acceptable, and prevailing.

2. The sympathy of Christ with God and with man, the offended One and the offender, *was perfected by means of His death.* Then and thereby it attained to its consummation. Then He understood fully what guilt involves; He appreciated both the holy resentment of God, and the criminality and forlorn situation of man. We do not depart from the spirit of Edwards's teaching, if we say that the prayer of Christ for His enemies, on the cross, emanated from a state of mind that absolutely meets the conditions of acceptable intercession.

3. The substitution of Christ was primarily in His

own heart. It was love, which comes under another's burden, makes another's suffering lot its own, lays aside self, as it were, and becomes another. This inward substitution led to, and was completed in, the final act of self-sacrifice.

4. By His voluntary submission to death, Christ signified His absolute approval of the righteousness of the law, on its penal, as well as its preceptive side. He gave the strongest possible proof of His sense of the justice of the divine administration in the allotment of death to the sinner. Being among men, and one of them, He honored and sanctioned the law both by keeping it, by overcoming temptation, and also, by sharing, without a murmur, in the righteous penalty which He had not personally incurred.

The originality and attractiveness of Edwards's discussion lies in the circumstance that it is an attempt to find the moral and spiritual elements of the Atonement, and thus unfold its *rationale*. It is not in the quantity of the Saviour's suffering alone, but in the sources and meaning of it, that he is interested. While holding that Christ suffered the penalty of sin, Edwards not only carefully excludes the idea that He was in consciousness, or in fact, an object of wrath; but he dwells also upon those spiritual perceptions and experiences which gave significance to the pain which He endured.

Dr. J. McLeod Campbell, in a treatise on the Atonement, which for its depth and religious earnestness has commanded general respect, starts with the alternative of Edwards, that sin must be followed by punishment, or by an adequate repentance. Discarding the idea that the Atonement is the bearing of the penalty, he regards it as an adequate repentance effected in the consciousness of Christ, the ingredient of personal remorse being absent, but all the spiritual elements being present which Edwards finds in the experience of Christ. Christ made an expiatory confession of our sins, which was "a perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man." * Faith is *our* "Amen" to this condemnation in the soul of Christ. Christ enters fully into the mind of God respecting sin; into His condemnation of it, and into His love to the sinner. There was "the equivalent repentance" which Edwards makes the alternative of punishment. With this, sanctioned, reproduced in its essential elements, in the believer, through his connection with Christ, God is satisfied.

Dr. Campbell goes beyond the Moral View of the Atonement. He makes the death of Christ necessary to the realization by Him of God's feeling and man's need. Without "the perfected experience of the enmity of the carnal mind to God," "an adequate con-

* The Nature of the Atonement, etc., 3d ed., p. 136.

fession of man's sin" could not have "been offered to God in humanity in expiation of man's sin, nor intercession have been made according to the extent of man's need of forgiveness." * Moreover, it is declared that Christ endured, and that it was necessary to the development of His inward experience that He should endure, death, under a sense of its character as "the wages of sin." "As our Lord alone truly tasted death, so to Him alone had death its perfect meaning as the wages of sin, for in Him alone was there full entrance into the mind of God towards sin, and perfect unity with that mind." † Christ, as being alone holy, could alone understand, and duly feel, what the forfeiting of life *means*. If men were mere spirits, a response to the divine mind concerning sin could only have had spiritual elements; but man being capable of death, and death being the wages of sin, it was not simply sin that had to be dealt with, but "an existing law with its penalty of death, and that death as already incurred." Hence a response was necessary to "that expression of the divine mind which was contained in God's making death the penalty of sin." ‡ The characteristic of Campbell's view is that suffering as such, he regards as of no account, but suffering and death are necessary as a *conditio sine qua non* of that entering into the mind of God—that expiatory confession—

* P. 289. † P. 302. ‡ P. 303.

which he considers the moral essence of the Atonement. Yet, it will be observed that, according to this representation Christ endures death, and with a vivid, painful, complete consciousness of the penal quality that belongs to it. How could this death come nearer to being identical with penalty, save by the introduction of an element of personal remorse or self-accusation, which Edwards equally excludes?

I make one further criticism upon Campbell. He brings out with great force and impressiveness the significance of the Saviour's intercessory prayer on the cross, with the confession of human guilt implied in it, as a full revelation of the righteous displeasure of God against sin, and at the same time, of His love and merciful inclination towards the sinner, which are presupposed in that supplication. There is a *revelation* of God's holy anger and His mercy; involving, to be sure, intense suffering in Him through whom it is made, in the act of making it. I am not certain that Campbell would confine the value of this confession and prayer of Christ to their significance as a *revelation* of God's mind, which we can lay hold of, and respond to with humble, grateful hearts. This, however, is the predominant representation in the treatise. Why not consider the supplication of Christ as, also, a real means of procuring the good sought? Why not consider the actual bestowal of grace—not the disposition to be-

stow it—as consequent on the intercession? The intercession presupposes, indeed, that God is merciful; but so does all prayer. And yet the idea of prayer is nullified if we do not hold that it procures, or tends to procure, a good not otherwise to be expected.

Those who have read Luther's Commentary on the Galatians will remember how earnestly he insists on the truth of Christ's unification of Himself with us, and of the unification of ourselves with Him through faith. In all the writings of Luther which bear on the subject, the same thought is prominent. Amid important diversities, there is yet a fundamental resemblance between his conception of the moral and spiritual elements of the Atonement, and that of Edwards. As regards what is conceived to have taken place in the soul of Christ, the two theologians have much in common. Dorner has clearly set forth Luther's ideas on this theme.* The soul of the Reformer entered deeply into the crushing feeling of *guilt*, as distinguished from that of misery or finite weakness. In this feeling, we first appreciate our unworthiness, but at the same time understand the value of our personality in the eyes of God. The longing for expiation or atonement involves the first pure ethical impulse. Conscious of our helplessness, our inability to make an atonement ourselves,

* Lehre v. d. Person Christi, ii. 513 seq.

we are met by the joyful tidings of a Mediator, sent from God, and of a righteousness in Him, which corresponds to the divine righteousness. This righteousness, although, in the first instance it is His, may also become ours through faith; faith being the personal assent and affirmation which we give to that Love on His part which takes our place, to its righteousness, holiness, and power. This substitution on His part carries in it so high a respect for us as individuals, for our personality, that it does not aim to do away with it, or to absorb it. The aim is, rather, to present it as righteous before God in a substitution which shall act upon it, recognizing it all the time as a separate personality, while the individual, on his side, gives himself up to Christ in faith, to be moulded by His plastic influence into the divine image, to be transformed into a child of God—a child in whom, reconciled and made holy, the righteousness of God attains to a personal manifestation. By faith we are drawn into the spiritual death of penitence, through the consciousness of being condemned in Him, but not without at the same time becoming aware of the divine will to save us—save our personal being itself—as reconciled in Christ. Luther states that before the Evangelical doctrine was brought out, preachers aimed to depict to their hearers the sufferings of Christ for the purpose of exciting their pity, and to make them weep. This, he says, is

wrong. We make the right use of Christ's sufferings, when we are led, by seeing Christ so sorrowful on our account, to sorrow for ourselves, for the sins that made Him mourn and suffer. We are to mourn over ourselves, and not over Him. His contrition in our behalf should make us contrite. Christ is to Luther the Child of God, who offers Himself to our faith that we may be clothed upon with divine sonship. God gives to us His Son, and tells us that He is well pleased with all that Christ says and does for us. "Thinkest thou not that if a human heart truly felt that good-pleasure which God has in Christ when He thus serves us, it would for very joy burst into a hundred thousand pieces? For then it would see into the abyss of the fatherly heart, yea into the fathomless and eternal goodness and love of God, which He feels towards us, and has felt from eternity?" "God's good-pleasure and his whole heart thou seest in Christ, in all His words and works;" and in turn Christ is in God's heart, and an object of His good-pleasure. Since Christ is thine and mine, we, too, are in the same good-pleasure of God, and as deep in His heart as Christ Himself. "We must first be in Christ, with all our nature, sin, death, and weakness, and know that we are freed therefrom, and redeemed, and pronounced blessed by this Christ. We must swing above ourselves and beyond ourselves over upon Him, yea, be utterly incor-

porated in Him, and be His own." Then sin, and fear, and death are gone: "I know of no death or hell. For I know that as Christ is in the Father, I am, also, in Christ." "In fine, by the word we become incorporated in Christ, so that all that He has is ours, and we can take Him on, as our own body. He in turn must take on Himself all that which befalls us, so that neither the world, the devil, nor any calamity can hurt or overcome us." "One must teach of faith correctly —even thus—that by it you become bound and united with Christ, so that out of Him and you there arises, as it were, one person, which does not suffer the two to be parted or sundered from one another, but where you evermore hang on Christ, and can say with joy and comfort--'I am Christ; not personally; but Christ's righteousness, victory, life, and everything which He has, is my own;' and so that Christ can say—'I am this poor sinner, that is all his sin and death are my sins and my death, since he hangs on me by faith, I on him,'—therefore, St. Paul says, 'we are members of Christ's body, of His flesh and His bones.' Wherefore when you in this affair separate your person and that of Christ from one another, you are under the law and live not in Christ." "Christ has taken on our flesh, which is full of sin, and has felt all woe and calamity, has demeaned Himself not otherwise before God, His Father, than if He had Himself done all the sin which

we have done, and as if He had deserved all that which we have deserved." Phil. ii.

The doctrine of Luther is that the uncreated Son of God has entered into human nature, has become man, has thus closely united Himself to us, has, in the fullness of His love and sympathy, taken upon His heart the whole burden of man as a sinner, has taken us up into His heart, making our case absolutely His own, has bewailed our sins before God, and died as if He had been Himself a sinner; that the end of all is to fashion us like Himself, into the image of God as His children; that in all this love to us and service in our behalf, the Father is well pleased, and receives us in Christ, provided we accept Him, cordially recognize the meaning of His grief, and giving up, as it were, our isolated individuality, surrender ourselves to Him to be moulded into the likeness of His Sonship. All things that belong to God are His, and all things that are His are ours. What Christ becomes and does for us, as our representative, is eventually reproduced through Him within us.

We pass from Luther to Schleiermacher. To Schleiermacher, Christ is the Source of a new spiritual life of communion with God, first realized in the Saviour Himself, and from Him communicated to those who are drawn out of themselves into fellowship with Him.

He is compared to an individual in whom the idea of the State should first come to consciousness, and who should gather the unorganized mass of men from the state of nature into a civil community by taking them up into a participation in this new life—the life of citizenship. The redemptive agency of Christ consists in the imparting to men, through the attractive power which He exerts upon them, that inward consciousness of fellowship with God (*Gottesbewusstsein*) which in Him is absolutely controlling, and holds every other feeling in due subordination to itself. His atoning work is the communication to them of His own undisturbed blessedness, which is the concomitant of this filial communion with God. Christ receives the believer to be a partaker of His holiness and blessedness—of His inward spiritual life. He acts upon men to this end. God looks upon the sinner, not as he is actually, but as he is in virtue of his relation to Christ, as he is ideally, as he will be when the process which has begun is complete. Sin still exists in him, but as a vanishing element.

The union of the believer to Christ brings the forgiveness of sin; since, the principle of sin being itself destroyed at the root, sin being driven, as it were, from the centre to the circumference of the character, evil or pain does not break up the harmony of the inward life; if the disciple suffered, the Master suffered

likewise: and evil, including death, loses its punitive aspect, and is transmuted into chastisement, or a merciful infliction. Forgiveness does not free from suffering; it simply changes its effect and its significance. The sufferings of Christ are not directly essential to His work as a Saviour. They are needful, first, as His devotion to the work of founding the new kingdom could be manifested in its fullness only by His not giving way to the utmost resistance, even to that which involved the destruction of His person; and, secondly, because His blessedness could only appear in its perfection in the continuance of it through the most extreme suffering, even that which grew out of the withstanding of sin, and out of His own fellow-feeling with sinful men, which attended this most bitter experience.

In the exposition of the priestly office of Christ, Schleiermacher fully develops the ideas sketched above. "The fact that only what Christ does corresponds perfectly to the divine will, and expresses purely and completely the reign of godliness (*Gottesbewusstsein*) in human nature, is the foundation of our relation to Him; and on the recognition of this everything that is distinctively Christian rests. In this is included the fact that, independently of his connection with Christ, neither any individual man, nor any particular part of the collective life of humanity, in any era, is, in and of itself, righteous before God, or an object of His approbation." "In liv-

ing fellowship with Christ, no one will be, or will be considered by God, anything for itself; but every one will appear only as inspired by Him, and as a portion, in the process of development, of His work." He is like the High Priest in relation to the people; God looks on them as in Him. "His pure will to fulfill the divine will is, by means of the vital fellowship between Him and us, operative in us, and we thus have part in His perfection, if not in the actual realization, nevertheless in the stimulus and spur (*antrieb*)." Christ has actually fulfilled the will of God, therefore, "not in our stead, but for our benefit." As concerns the passive obedience, or sufferings, of Christ, "in every human community, so far as it can be considered a distinct whole, there is as much evil as there is sin; so that, to be sure, evil is the punishment of sin; not, however, in the sense that each individual suffers completely and exclusively just the evil which stands in connection with his personal sin. Therefore, in every case where another suffers evils which are not connected with his own sin, it can be said that he suffers punishment for others, who, since the sin, as the cause and fountain of evil, has exhausted itself, are no longer smitten with evils in consequence of it. Since Christ, in order to take us up into the fellowship of His life, must enter into the fellowship of our life which is sinful, where sin is continually begetting suffering and

evil, He suffered for the entire human race; for to the whole race He chose to ally Himself. As High Priest, moreover, His sympathy with human guilt and ill-desert, or His sympathetic apprehension of it, which was the motive of His redemptive work, reached its highest pitch when it inspired Him to undergo death at the hands of sinners. Here was His victory over sin; and with it, over evil which sin brings in its train. Hence, by the sufferings of Christ punishment may be said to be abolished, because in the communion of His blessed life, evil, which becomes a vanishing element, is no longer felt as a penalty. It is in His sufferings that we behold His holiness, and His blessedness also, which are seen to be invincible under the severest test. By entering into His sufferings, the conviction of His holiness and blessedness is brought home to us. The suffering of Christ is vicarious, in that His sympathetic apprehension (*mitgefühl*) of sin is complete, even as regards those who are not themselves distressed by the consciousness of sin; and in the sense that, being Himself sinless, He is not under obligation to suffer. His sympathetic compassion for men as sinners is strong enough to take in all; it exhibits itself fully in His freely giving Himself up to death; and it serves ever to complete and perfect our imperfect consciousness of sin. Christ sustains a relation to us which renders Him the representative of the entire human race, in-

asmuch as, in the character of a High Priest, He brings our prayers to God, and brings to us the divine blessing. He is the Priest whom all preceding priesthoods imperfectly foreshadow. He is the most perfect Mediator between God and every separate portion of the human race, no one of whom, in and for himself, could be an object for God, or come into any connection with Him. In His consciousness is the norm and the fountain of acceptable piety. Even the penitence which is appropriate for sin, finds its pattern and potence in His sympathetic sense of its evil." *

It is impossible not to be struck with the spiritual insight and scientific method, which mark Schleiermacher's discussion of this subject. Christ, bringing into the race the life of holy and blessed communion with God; maintaining in Himself this life of filial love and of deep, inward peace consequent upon it, even in the midst of death inflicted by the malignity of men, into whose condition of sin and misery He entered with an exhaustive sympathy; annihilating thus, by His holy constancy, sin as a principle, and with it the suffering of which sin is the parent, and which is put in the way of gradual extinguishment; propagating this inward life, within the circle of His historic influence, by drawing sinful men up into the fellowship of His filial relation to God, and

* Glaubenslehre, II. 1, § 51 seq.

thus giving them, too, the victory of the spirit over the flesh; lifting them, also, above the power of outward calamity to break the soul's calm, and transmuting for them all outward suffering, including physical death, into a means of purification and peace—these ideas surely include an important part of the Gospel.

But signal as are the merits, not less marked are the defects of Schleiermacher's exposition. The subjective character of his theology, which appears, for example, in his confining piety to the sphere of feeling, and in his explication of prayer, and which imparts a Pantheistic coloring to his entire system, is manifest in this discussion of the Atonement. Sin is not conceived of strictly as an abnormal element, but rather as a lower stage in human development. The end of the work of Christ is not so much to rescue, as to elevate, human nature. Hence the feeling of guilt, and its correlate, the conscientious anger of God, fail of a due recognition. When the principle of sin is broken in its control, it is conceived that guilt and the sense of guilt disappear of themselves. The new man puts away this feeling as not belonging to him, but to a former self. Guilt is really made to be a spur to an onward development, instead of being retrospective and retributive in its import. Therefore, the conscious need of expiation fails to be recognized in the deep power which is seen to belong to it

in the mind of Christian and heathen alike. According to Schleiermacher, the work of Christ, and His death as a part of it, delivers from sin, and delivers from punishment; but this last effect is within the sphere of the natural order, in the way of cause and effect, and not from any other influence upon the mind of God.

Among the theologians who may be loosely designated as of the Schleiermacherian school, one of the most original and suggestive is Rothe. The main points of his theory of the Atonement may be here stated. Redemption must take away the consequence of sin to the transgressor, in his relation to God—his being under the wrath of God, or guilt and punishment. This is possible only through forgiveness. And redemption must take away sin itself, and restore in man the dominion of the opposite principle. *Both elements mutually condition each other.* God, on account of His holiness and righteousness, cannot forgive the sinner unless he is actually freed from sin; but, on the other hand, this last is impossible if the sinner is not first forgiven; for so long as God repels him, he cannot turn to God, or get rid of sin. Here is an antinomy. Even the holiness and righteousness of God require this to be dissolved and removed; for these attributes are not content with the *mere* punishment of sin; they crave the actual destruction of sin itself, the termina-

tion of its control in the hearts of men. So that, in case forgiveness is indispensable to this result, holiness and righteousness call for forgiveness; only they demand inexorably that pardon shall be granted in such a way as to carry in it, likewise, the holy reaction of God against sin, *i. e.*, these very feelings of holiness and righteousness. The solution of the antinomy is the Atonement, or the making of sin *forgivable;* a modification in the relation between the sinner and God, in virtue of which God, notwithstanding His holiness and righteousness, can forgive the sin which still cleaves to him, and, notwithstanding its presence, can enter into communion with him. There is only one way of effecting this result. If sin is to be forgiven before it is actually removed or destroyed, God must have a guaranty, which is perfect, as inhering in the transaction itself, that sin will in *the future* be in fact wholly put away from the sinner, provided forgiveness is provisionally imparted to him, so that this preliminary reception of pardon, this pardon by anticipation, shall be itself the actual beginning of a continuous process of purification from sin, which will at length be absolutely complete. If forgiveness can be thus the first step, the indispensable and sure antecedent, of the actual deliverance from sin itself, then, and then only, can the relation of God to the sinner be one in which God does not manifest wrath. Nay it

will become a relation in which even His holiness and righteousness require Him to receive the sinner, as reconciled, into communion and favor. Sin is so connected with sin, and man so connected with man, that this new possibility must come in with reference to the race of mankind as a whole. This possibility is created, with regard to the race and to individuals, by the perfecting of the second Adam, as Redeemer. In Him dwells the power sufficient for the actual abolition of sin in mankind, as a whole and as individuals, and He has actually set on foot the historical process which will have this issue, it being presupposed that the anticipatory forgiveness of sin on the side of God takes place. In the case of every individual who by faith enters into fellowship with Christ, there is given to God a *guaranty* for his future complete emancipation from sin, and for the fact that his pardon is only the initial step of the efficient process which is to remove sin in him, and to separate him wholly from it. By the Saviour, then, a foundation is laid for the reception into the relation of fellowship with God of the old sinful humanity estranged from Him, and for an ethico-religious development which will more and more lead that humanity into the way of righteousness.

How has the Redeemer atoned for mankind? Rothe answers, By qualifying Himself to be a Redeemer. What was needed was a human being who

should be absolutely qualified completely to effect the abolition of sin, or the recovery of men from its influence and control. Christ has developed Himself in an absolutely normal way to the point of perfection as a moral and spiritual being; and in doing so He has brought Himself into an absolute union, on the one hand with God, and, on the other, with the race of mankind. This is the completed sanctification of the Redeemer, by which He is specially fitted to be, in a perfectly adequate way, the cause and principle of our sanctification. The moral task which Jesus set before Him was that of a complete self-surrender to God, on the one hand, and to man, on the other. He gave all that belonged to Him, including His own sensuous being, His life, as an offering to God, an offering of Himself, and to men as a self-sacrifice, for their best good, and out of love to them. This was a work done in and upon Himself, in the midst of trial, in successful combat with the Tempter of souls; but done for the sake of men. This work culminated in the voluntary endurance of death, which consummated the surrender of everything His own. This submission to death perfected at once His union to God, and His union to men. Love could go no farther. This self-surrender, carried to an exhaustive accomplishment, involved the most strenuous moral exertion on His part. Being a work undertaken entirely for our sake, it was vicarious: the holy

One performed a work in the name of the sinner, which the sinner was incapable of performing for Himself. Potentially in Him the old sinful race were regenerated; and He was, therefore, the representative of mankind, and of every individual. His suffering has its ground, not in Himself, the sinless One, but only in the sinfulness of the world, in which He had to fulfill the moral task of His life, and for the sake of which He fulfilled it. He shares the world's suffering, and thereby takes it away; since in overcoming sin, He overcomes evil, or suffering, the consequence of sin, and since, through His fellow-feeling with the sinful world, He felt sympathetically the sufferings that befell them, and which are properly not His—not His in the character which pertains to them in the mind of the ill-deserving who endure them—*i. e.* as the penalty of sin. Thus He bore the penalties of our sins; not, however, as His own punishment, but as ours. He put Himself in feeling in our place, though without any confusion of consciousness, or self-accusation. Unlike good men, martyrs, He endured suffering in absolute innocence, and His suffering is the absolute ground and cause of our exemption from it, or of its ultimate removal. So that the suffering of the Redeemer is, in an altogether peculiar way, vicarious. By merit is meant a product of moral exertion, which is of a nature to be an instrument adapted and

available to all in the work that devolves on them in life as moral beings. The Redeemer by making Himself what He was, the one sufficient instrument of the moral renovation of men, and of their recovery from sin, created this merit—this sacrament as it may be called, universal in its efficacy and value. When through Him we receive the forgiveness of our sins, it is by means of His merit being reckoned to us, or imputed: that is to say, our sin is forgiven, not because there is in ourselves the real possibility and absolute warranty of a future complete deliverance from sin, but because these inhere in the Redeemer; and this deliverance is conditioned on our relation to Him. It lies in that which He has produced as the means of our attaining the end of our being. It is a part of Rothe's conception, that the glorification of Christ, and the power which He exerts upon men, as the dispenser of influences from above, is the legitimate fruit of that spiritual perfection to which He attained in conflict with temptation and through His self-surrender in death. His personal power continues to be exerted in a vastly augmented degree, in this higher development and sphere of His being.

No theologian has laid more stress than Rothe upon the retroactive bearing of the conflict of Jesus with evil—its effect upon Himself. In Rothe this view stands connected with a particular theory of the rela-

tion of matter to spirit, and of the spiritualization of matter. But, independently of this speculation, he insists upon a truth which the interpreters of the New Testament, at the present day, are led more distinctly to recognize than it was formerly the habit to do. Sinless as Christ was from the beginning, the events of His career, the victory over temptation, the experience of sorrow and of death, did not leave His character unaffected. It is characteristic of that great religious genius, President Edwards, that He should have spoken of the increase of the Saviour's holiness in passing through the scenes that preceded and attended the crucifixion. The meaning of His life, as regards Himself, and hence in relation to others, is missed, unless the reality of His temptation, and of all the struggles which the Evangelists record, especially that in the Garden, is fully recognized, and unless His character in the maturity of its perfection is looked upon as the product of His own faithful performance, amid the circumstances in which He was placed, of the work given Him to do. What a burden was rolled off, when He said: "It is finished!"

It will be observed that Rothe, in common with Edwards, Campbell, Luther, and Schleiermacher, ascribes to Jesus a fellow-feeling with sinful men, which carried Him out of Himself and caused Him, though without the least self-reproach, to take up into His conscious-

ness the penal quality which inheres in the ordinance of death, and thus to have an intimate knowledge of what it is to be punished by God, and to be under His frown. The outward inflictions of punishment were there, and the inward experience, also, as far as an utterly self-devoted sympathy could engender it.

But Rothe, with Schleiermacher, conceives of guilt as the mere shadow of sin, vanishing as sin vanishes, and makes the energy of the divine love and righteousness concentrate upon the breaking of the control of sin as a principle, that it may be put on the way to an ultimate extinction. The retributive element, the divine resentment, "the wrath of God," demands nothing but a guaranty for the abandonment of sin; although it should be said, by way of qualification, that God requires the means for working out this result to be originated and gathered by the struggle and sacrifice of the second Adam, on the plane of our human life, subject to all its exposures and penal inflictions.

There are two tendencies which the profoundest modern theology in connection with this subject plainly discloses. The one is an unwillingness to rest in the idea of bare suffering, apart from its particular motives and concomitants, as if that alone had an atoning virtue. It is felt that suffering needlessly incurred, or arbitrarily imposed, or not growing naturally out of

the providential situation in which the Sufferer is placed, would not answer the end. The whole effort even of Edwards is to show the naturalness of the Saviour's anguish, and of its constituent elements, considering what His character and situation were.

Associated with the tendency just mentioned is the disposition to make no point of the *quantum* of suffering, as if a mathematical equivalent were to be sought for the penalty due to sin. The juridical conception of this subject, certainly in this mechanical form, is obsolescent. A more satisfactory view is suggested in the following passage from Canon Mozley:

"There is, however, undoubtedly contained in the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement, a kind, and a true kind, of *fulfilment* of justice. It is a fulfilment in the sense of appeasing and satisfying justice; appeasing that appetite for punishment which is the characteristic of justice in relation to evil. There is obviously an appetite in justice which is implied in that very anger which is occasioned by crime, by a wrong being committed; we desire the punishment of the criminal as a kind of redress, and his punishment undoubtedly satisfies a natural craving of our mind. But let any one have exposed himself thus to the appetite for punishment in our nature, and it is undoubtedly the case, however we may account for it, that the real suffering of another for him, of a good person for a guilty one,

will mollify the appetite for punishment, which was possibly up to that time in full possession of our minds; and this kind of satisfaction to justice, and appeasing of it, is involved in the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement. And so, also, there is a kind of *substitution* involved in the Scripture doctrine of the Atonement, and a true kind; but it is not a literal, but a moral kind of substitution. It is one person suffering in behalf of another, for the sake of another: in that sense he takes the place and acts in the stead of another, he suffers that another may escape suffering, he condemns himself to a burden that another may be relieved. But this is the moral substitution which is inherent in acts of love and labor *for* others; it is a totally different thing from the literal substitution of one person for another in punishment. The outspoken witness in the human heart, which has from the beginning embraced the doctrine of the Atonement with the warmth of religious affection, has been, indeed, a better judge on the moral question than particular formal schools of theological philosophy. The atoning act of the Son, as an act of love on behalf of sinful man, appealed to wonder and praise: the effect of the act in changing the regards of the Father towards the sinner, was only the representation, in the sublime and ineffable region of mystery, of an effect which men recognized in their own minds. The human heart accepts mediation. It

does not understand it as a whole; but the fragment of which it is conscious is enough to defend the doctrine upon the score of morals." "Justice is a fragment, mercy is a fragment, mediation is a fragment; justice, mercy, mediation as a reason for mercy—all three; what indeed are they but great vistas and openings into an invisible world in which is the point of view which brings them all together?"*

The Son of God became man: He took on Him our human nature: "He condemned sin in the flesh;" that is, He adjudged it a usurper, broke its control, expelled it from the nature which He had taken on, and thus became a leaven for the purification of that same nature in all who share it with Him. In doing this, He did not evade, but submissively carried that nature through, the righteous penalties allotted in the moral order to sin, so glorifying God, and appealing only to His mercy on behalf of His brethren. So there was a reparation in the moral order, violated by our disloyalty; and that holy feeling of God, coexisting with a desire to save, which craved such a reparation—that feeling mysteriously likened to "wrath" in us—was appeased.

* Mozley's University Sermons, p. 175–177.

VII.

THE UNITY OF BELIEF AMONG CHRISTIANS.

The alleged diversity of belief among Christians, in the past ages of the Church and at present, is often made an apology for scepticism. The first of the causes to which Lord Bacon attributes atheism is "divisions in religion, if they be many."* Who shall determine what the truth is, it is asked, in this chaos of opinion? Who shall pronounce upon the meaning of the Bible when interpreters are in perpetual discord with one another? These questions are founded on a mistaken assumption. In the first place, the essential religious truth is confounded with the varieties of exposition and philosophy in which it has been formulated and defended at different times and in different schools of thought. Secondly, upon the fundamental principles of the Gospel, the Church has not been thus distracted. There has been no such revolution of opinion as took place in physical science, when, for example, the Ptolemaic doctrine which made the earth

* Essays, xvi., of Atheism.

the centre, the geocentric theory, was supplanted by the Copernican which made the sun the centre, the heliocentric. Christ has held the central place in the Christian system from the beginning until now. His Incarnation and Atonement have been continually the objects of faith. The primitive church discarded alike Ebionism which rejected His divinity, and Docetism which rejected His humanity.

The Nicene theology was the perfecting of a definition, not the introduction of a new opinion. That theology has been for substance the creed of Greek, Roman Catholic, and Protestant, the only exception being sects which have professed to dissent from the common belief. Various explanations of the Atonement have been made. There were early theories which were, in some of their details, crude. But even those theories, and all others of later date which have obtained a lodgment in the Church, have recognized the mediatorial agency of Christ in procuring forgiveness by His humiliation and death. As to the main fact of the Atonement there has been a general concurrence. The controversy of Protestant and Roman Catholic does not turn on these cardinal points of doctrine. Both stand for the truth declared in the ancient œcumenical creeds. Their differences relate to the value of tradition, to the constitution and authority of the Church, to the nature of the Sacraments, to the way in which the Atonement

becomes available to the individual—whether by faith alone, or by faith and something else—also, to various minor particulars of creed and rite, most of which are the direct or indirect offshoot of the last mentioned difference. But behind these diversities, grave and important as they are, there is a common Christianity in the profession of which they unite. Here they stand together, rendering one answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" It is not to be overlooked that debates among Protestants have been largely owing to ambiguities of language. One of the most laborious disputants of the seventeenth century—that era of stormy debate—Richard Baxter, towards the close of his life, wrote: "I perceive that most of the Doctrinal controversies among Protestants are far more about equivocal words than matter." He adds with affecting candor: "Experience since the year 1643 to this year, 1675, hath loudly called me to repent of my own prejudices, sidings, and censurings of causes and persons not understood, and of all the miscarriages of my ministry and life which have been thereby caused; and to make it my chief work to call men that are within my hearing to more peaceable thoughts, affections, and practices." At an earlier day, Bacon wrote: "It cannot but open men's eyes, to see that many controversies do merely pertain to that which is either not revealed or positive; and that many others do

grow upon weak and obscure inferences or derivations: which latter sort, if men would revive the blessed style of that great doctor of the Gentiles, would be carried thus, *Ego, non Dominus* [I, not the Lord], and again, *Secundum consilium meum* [according to my counsel]; in opinions and counsels, not in positions and oppositions." *

* Of the Advancement of Learning, b. ii.

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